■ Sports / A25

Frankie Miñoza ties for 4th in Indonesian Open

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Burglars prove bigger problem than terrorists

■ World / A8

Hopes fade for Prince Rainier

■ News / A2

Co-ed found dead in Boracay after night of partying

Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Bagong graduates: Maganda ba ang hinaharap?

CELLCARD KADA ARAW, CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! Text 2910 now!

Computer school to keep Muslims from extremism

By Christian V. Esguerra

TO KEEP them out of terror's way, some 200 out-of-school Muslim youths of the Maharlika Village in Taguig City are set to enroll in a summer computer program jointly organized by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the Philippine Islamic Council.

COMPUTER/ A22

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Teaching kids about birds and bees? Tell it like it is

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

BAKIT NGA BA "BIRDS AND BEES?"

DUMAGUETE CITY—How to teach children about the birds and the bees?

Take it from population experts: Drop the eu-

TEACHING/ A20

VAT hike needed–UP 11

SALUBONG: The early morning celebration of Easter Sunday called "Salubong" commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a festive confetti-filled affair at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Quezon City. The scene was repeated many times over in the whole of Christendom yesterday. AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

Experts say tax bill is economy's final hope

By Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

CLAIMING that the country was still in fiscal crisis contrary to the pronouncements of the government, economists from the University of the Philippines said the shape of the valued-added tax (VAT) measure that Congress is expected to finalize this week would determine whether the country would remain in its fiscal sickbed.

"Without a credible law that increases the VAT rate now [and expands its coverage later], the government's fiscal reform program has no leg to stand on," 11 professors at the University of the Philippines School of Economics said in a paper titled "The economy on a cusp: The proposed VAT amendments and their larger significance." *(See related story on Page A2.)*

The UP 11 released the 17-page paper on Good Friday, four days before Congress is set to hold a special session on March 30-April 1 in order to pass a bill restructuring the VAT system.

The release of the UP 11 paper came seven months after the same group had warned that the economy would face collapse in two years unless the government reined in the public sector deficit

VAT HIKE/ A21

Ailing Pope blesses flock but is unable to speak

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II appeared at his window to bless the tens of thousands of pilgrims and tourists who packed St. Peter's Square for Easter Sunday, making the sign of the cross with his hand but unable to speak.

Aides had readied a microphone, and the Pope appeared to be trying to utter a few words. After making a few sounds, he just made signs of the cross, and the microphone was taken away.

John Paul coughed briefly when he first appeared, but remained at the window for 12 minutes and looked stronger than he had in recent appearances.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who presided over Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square, read the Pope's Easter message as the Pontiff followed the text from his studio.

The Pope last spoke publicly on March 13 just before he was discharged from the hospital, and many in the crowd cried when the Pope failed to speak. Others applauded when the Pope appeared.

The Vatican had said John Paul would appear on Easter Sunday, but officials never confirmed he would speak.

But a German man in the crowd said he felt "sadness" after the Pope didn't speak.

"Look, it's Easter and every-

AILING / A20

PPI dared: Shed 'old boys club' mentality

By Alcuin Papa

CONTROVERSY continues to simmer on newspaper row.

With the Holy Week over, the Manila Standard Employees Association (MSEA) is hopeful that the "conflict of interest" issue it had earlier raised before the Philippine Press Institute (PPI) against Makati Rep. Teodoro "Teddyboy" Locsin Jr. would soon be resolved.

MSEA vice president Jing Villamente yesterday called on the PPI, headed by Malaya publisher Amado "Jake" Macasaet, to make an official stand on the complaint filed by the union against Locsin, former publisher of Today and now publisher of the newly merged Manila Standard Today.

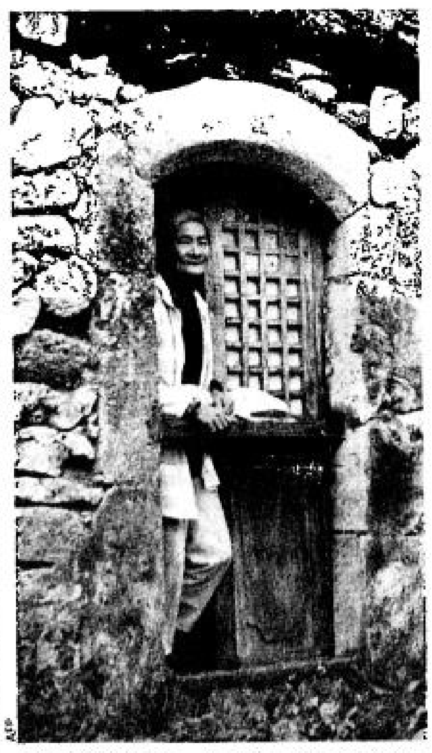
"How can Locsin handle the newspaper and remain independent when he is a congressman?" Villamente had earlier said.

The PPI, a national organization of Philippine newspapers, has as its principal aim the promotion of ethical standards and the professional development of Filipino journalists.

It also seeks to protect the rights and freedoms of Filipino journalists in the practice of their profession.

PPI DARED/ A22

Batanes eyed as world heritage site



AFP

FLORENTINA Estrella, 79, looks out of her unique lime and stone house built in 1887.

BASCO, Batanes—Nothing much has changed in Batanes in a hundred years or more. There are no shopping malls or luxury apartments. Electricity is relatively new and telecommunication remains a novelty in this remote corner of the Philippine archipelago, separated only by the Bashi Channel from southern Taiwan.

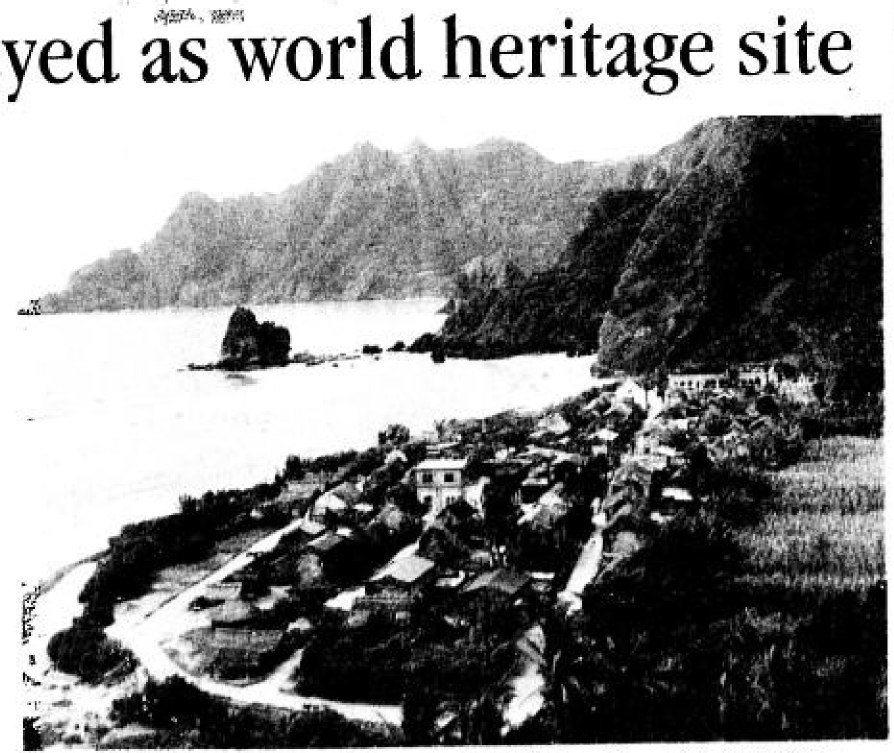
So isolated are the islands that make up the country's smallest province that they are often left off local maps of the Philippines altogether.

But all that is about to change.

Batanes, with its mix of unique and ancient archeology and architecture, has been nominated as the sixth "world heritage" site in the Philippines by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

The listing carries a certain

BATANES/ A22



TRANQUIL and unspoiled, this remote centuries-old fishing village of Chavayan in the town of Sabtang in Batanes is where time virtually stands still. AFP

Press freedom watchdog to probe journalists' slay

REPORTERS Without Borders will send a fact-finding team to the Philippines next month to investigate the deaths of journalists, the global press freedom watchdog said yesterday.

The announcement of the April 7-13 visit follows the murder in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, on Maundy Thursday of a newspaper columnist who had campaigned against corruption.

Marlene Garcia Esperat, 45, was the fourth journalist murdered in the Philippines this year after 13 were killed last year, making the country one of the world's most dangerous places for members of the press.

In a letter to Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Reporters Without Borders said there was an "urgent need to restore a climate that allows the press to work properly after repeated attacks that have gone completely unpunished."

A similar investigation by the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists in January found that a "widespread culture of violence that is tolerated and condoned by the government and officials" was behind last year's deaths, a claim the government has denied.

Reporters Without Borders said in its letter: "We call on you to take the necessary measures to protect journalists and to ensure that a serious investigation establishes the precise motives for Esperat's murder.

"No hypothesis should be ruled out, but it is already clear that she was probably killed because of her work as a journalist."

Esperat was receiving police protection after a series of threats against her. But shortly before her murder, she allowed her bodyguards to go home for Easter.

A columnist for the weekly community newspaper Midland Review, Esperat was gunned

PRESS/ A21

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/03/28/05

Second FRONTPAGE

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Bomb found outside Makati bldg.

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

POLICE found an improvised explosive in front of an office building in Makati's Central Business District (CBD) but dismissed it as the handiwork of amateurs.

"It was an incomplete improvised explosive device. *Nananakot lang ang mga ito* (They are just trying to sow fear)," Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr., chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said yesterday.

"The Abu Sayyaf does not use such kind of explosives," Razon said.

The device was found at around 8:15 p.m. on Saturday on a planter atop the stairs leading to the back entrance of the 15-story ACT Tower at the corner of N. Garcia Street and Gil Puyat Avenue.

The building, whose main entrance faces H.V. de la Costa Street, houses the Spanish Embassy on the fifth floor.

"Security was too lax at the ACT Tower, given that the Spanish Embassy is there. If there was no roving guard, [the improvised explosive] would not have been found," said Chief Insp. Manuel Santos Jr., chief of the CBD community precinct.

But he added: "[The bombers] were not professionals because the bomb would not have exploded; it would only have caught fire. This is not the work of terrorists."

Shoe box

The explosive—consisting of firecracker powder contained in an aluminum canister, a cell phone and a 9-volt battery, according to Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil—was placed in a shoe box wrapped in an orange plastic bag.

A Marine security detailed at the building called in the discovery of the suspicious package to police. Members of Makati's Explosives and Ordnance Division responded to the call.

"Initial findings disclosed that the improvised explosive device does not bear the signature of the Abu Sayyaf Group or the Jemaah Islamiyah," said Bataoil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police.

Santos said the device was detonated on the sidewalk roughly 18 meters away from the spot where it was found.

Nevertheless, top police officials led by PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao rushed to the scene.

"[The improvised explosive] could not have caused much damage because it was made of powder used in firecrackers. When it was detonated, there was no crater effect," Razon said.

Other bombs

Authorities also announced the discovery of other bombs in Isabela City and Dinas town in Zamboanga del Sur on Friday and Saturday.

Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad told the INQUIRER in Zamboanga City that a street sweeper discovered a hand grenade attached to a motorbike's starter at around 6 a.m. on Good Friday.

The motorbike was parked near the cathedral in Isabela. Jumoad said the grenade could have exploded had the motorbike been started.

Col. Raymundo Ferrer, commander of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade based in Basilan, said the military was looking into the matter.

The military said a tip-off led to the discovery of bombs and bomb paraphernalia in Barangay Migpolao, Dinas.

Brig. Gen. Gabriel Habacon, chief of the 1st Infantry Division, said among the items found were three shells for a 40-mm grenade launcher and an M-14 rifle.

Habacon credited Nurham Amel of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front for the discovery.

A MARINE shows off the fragments of a cell phone authorities said would have triggered the explosive device found outside the Spanish Embassy Saturday night.

AFP

Still on alert

Bataoil said the PNP remained on "full alert" for possible terrorist attacks.

Last week, Lomibao said the Abu Sayyaf was planning bomb attacks in Metro Manila and in key cities nationwide during the Holy Week.

He said this would be in retaliation for the killing of 22 prisoners, including three top Abu Sayyaf leaders, after a failed jailbreak from Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig on March 15.

The Coast Guard has also deployed the full force of its sea marshals in port areas and aboard ships during the Holy Week, which is also when the number of ship passengers is at its highest.

Task Force Sea Marshals was created shortly after the bombing of the SuperFerry 14 last year, which left over 100 people dead or missing. *With reports from Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Leila B. Salaverria in Manila*

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VAT take from IPPs watered down—Joker

By TJ Burgonio

ENERGY officials are watering down their estimates of the income to be gained from imposing the value-added tax on independent power producers (IPPs) to justify Malacañang's position on the matter, administration Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

During a briefing to senators before the Lenten break, energy officials said that lifting the exemption of the IPPs would only yield the government some P1.7 billion in revenues.

"DOE officials are trying to minimize the revenue take to justify the government position that VAT-ing the IPPs and the generating companies isn't worth the trouble," Arroyo said in an interview.

The senator also wondered why there was a huge discrepancy between the estimates of the energy officials and those of the finance officials, who pegged the revenues from imposing the VAT on IPPs at between P22 billion and P30 billion.

"Two government agencies having two set of figures on the same industry? This could only happen in the Philippines. No wonder senators are not attending the briefings," he said.

"Why is the government protecting and favoring the IPPs? Government has gone to great lengths to dispatch DOE officials to contradict DOF officials as to what would be the revenue take," Arroyo added.

Two days from now, senators will be attending a special session called by President Macapagal-Arroyo to tackle the VAT bill, still divided on whether to lift the exemption of the IPPs.

The Senate adjourned for the Lenten break on March 18 without passing its version of the VAT bill, which seeks to retain the 10-percent VAT, lift the exemptions on 12 commodities, and raise the corporate income tax by 32 to 35 percent.

Francis Chua, the president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Foundation and executive vice president of the Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc., has urged the Senate to keep in mind the urgency of the country's need for additional substantial revenues.

Chua said any more delays in the VAT bill could bring serious repercussions like the possibility of downgrades by the international credit rating agencies and the loss of confidence among foreign investors.

This could constrict the sources of foreign loans resulting in higher interest rates for both existing and future borrowings, Chua said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the Senate would be able to muster a quorum during the three-day special session when some senators would still be abroad on official business.

Student dies in Boracay

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A 20-year-old student was found dead early yesterday morning after a night of partying on Boracay Island.

Michaela Marie Gatchalian from Talisay City, Negros Occidental, was pronounced dead on arrival at around 5 a.m. at the Boracay Hospital. Police are investigating the cause of her death.

Chief Insp. Jack Wanky, chief of the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU), said they found no visible injuries or wounds on Gatchalian, an incoming fourth-year student at the Riverside College School of Nursing in Bacolod City.

Police have detained Gatchalian's boyfriend, John Paul Sitchon, 24, for questioning.

Sitchon, from Bacolod City, sought assistance from members of the BSPU at around 4:20 a.m. shortly after the couple returned to their rented room at Ralph's Place at the D'Mall complex near Boat Station 2 in Balabag village.

Sitchon told investigators they had attended a party and had been drinking before retiring to their room. He said he went to the bathroom and when he emerged, his girlfriend lay unconscious on the bed.

Gatchalian, according to Sitchon, was asthmatic but did not say if she had an asthma attack before losing consciousness.

Wanky said they found several bottles of beer and other liquor in the couple's room which they had occupied since they arrived on the island on Wednesday.

Gatchalian's remains were taken to the Prado Funeral Parlor in Barangay Caticlan on the Aklan mainland and is scheduled to be taken to Iloilo City where an autopsy will be conducted.

Gatchalian's parents, Mike and Maggie, are both in the United States. They were inconsolable when they heard of their daughter's death, according to a family friend.

Gatchalian, the older of two siblings, was to leave for the US this summer to visit her parents, the friend said. *With a report from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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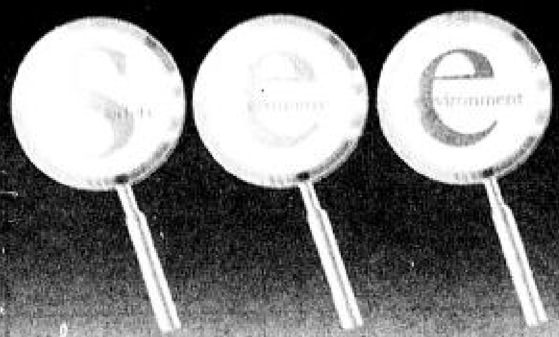

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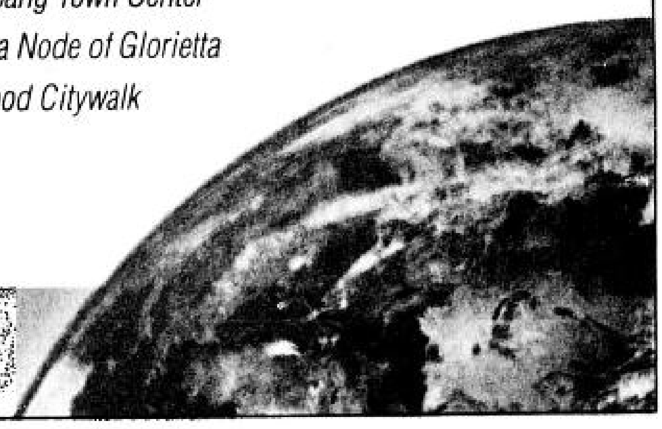

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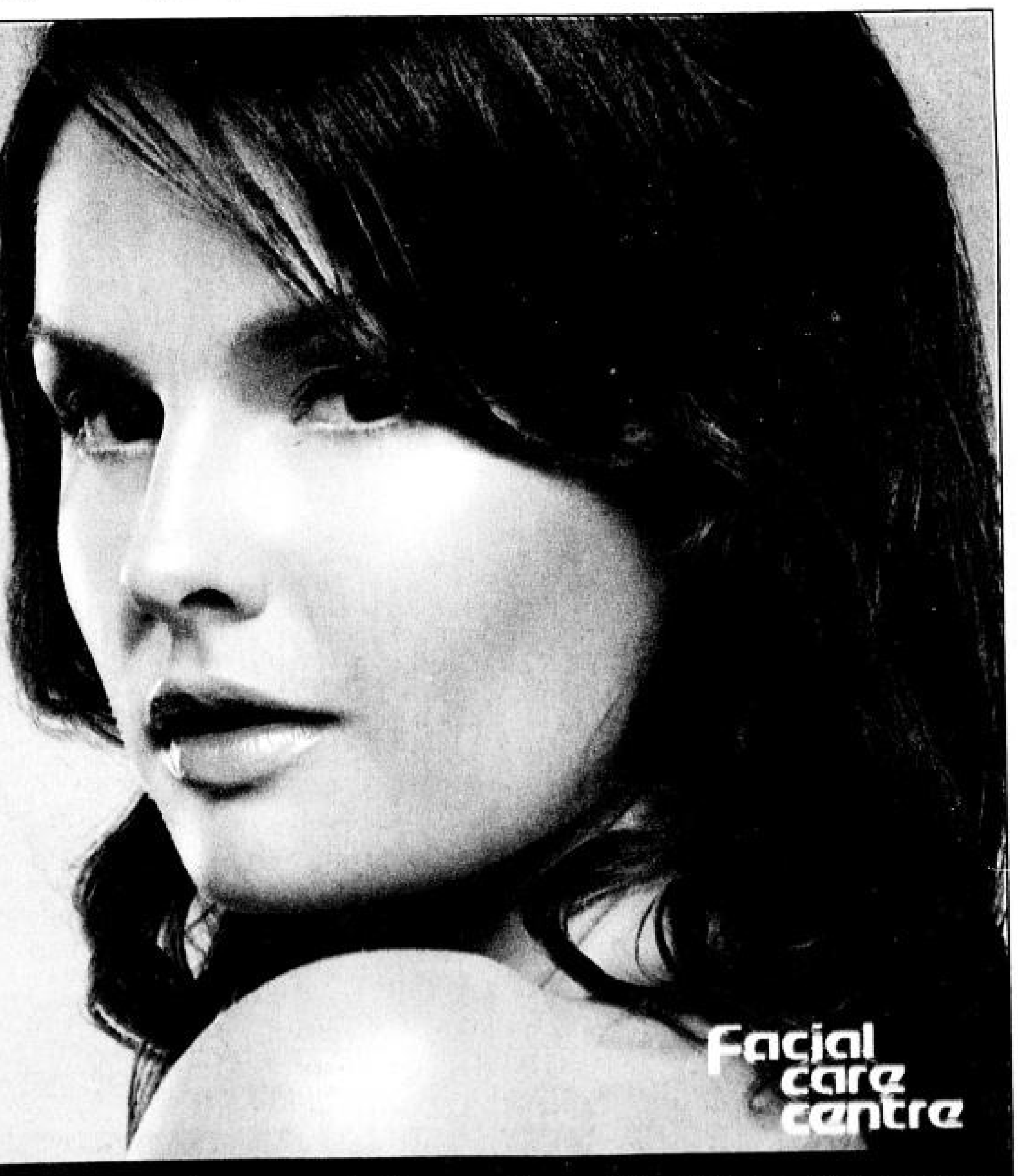

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'Frontline' employees exempted from 4-day workweek

POLICEMEN, soldiers, doctors, firemen and other government employees rendering "frontline" services are among those exempted from the four-day workweek scheme to be implemented in national government agencies starting April 4 by Malacafiang.

The plan was devised by the government in response to the continuing surge in the global price of oil, which has jacked up domestic oil prices.

Budget Undersecretary Mario Relampagos said yesterday the Department of Budget and Management would meet today to discuss the implementing rules for the program, which is expected to run from April until the end of May.

Relampagos said the program would start on April 4 or next Monday. The implementing rules would be released within the week, he said.

"We will see if this (scheme) will go beyond May," Relampagos said in a phone interview, when asked about the possibility of the plan being implemented beyond two months.

And because the workweek had been shortened to four days, he said the proposal was to stretch the work hours, with employees possibly working from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

Relampagos said the implementing rules of the program would enumerate the government agencies exempted from the scheme.

Specifically, agencies rendering frontline services such as police, government hospitals, the fire bureau, and those in charge of emergency and calamity work would be exempted, he said.

Also exempted from the scheme are employees of revenue-generating agencies like the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue, according to the budget undersecretary.

Christine O. Avendano

Romulo appeals for Tarongoy release anew

By Nikko Dizon and Jerome Aning

FOREIGN Secretary Alberto Romulo has renewed his appeal to the captors of Robert Tarongoy to release the Filipino worker who has been a hostage for nearly six months.

"Once again, on behalf of the Philippine government, its people, and the family of Robert, I would like to urge the release of Robert Tarongoy unharmed now. We remain hopeful that compassion and reason will eventually bring this release," Romulo said in a statement posted on the Department of Foreign Affairs website Good Friday.

Romulo also urged everyone to continue praying for the release of the 31-year-old accountant who has been held by Iraqi militants since Nov. 1, 2004.

Nothing has been heard from Tarongoy's captors since they granted him a reprieve on March 12.

In his statement, Romulo reiterated the government's position on the hostage crisis, which had earlier been deemed as a response to the two demands reportedly made by the Iraqi militants, "to ensure there is no misunderstanding in our current efforts for the release of Robert."

Romulo once again stressed that the Philippine government does not allow Filipino workers to seek employment in Iraq and has stamped all Philippine passports with the words "Not Valid for Travel to Iraq" in Arabic and English to prevent Filipino workers from entering Iraq.

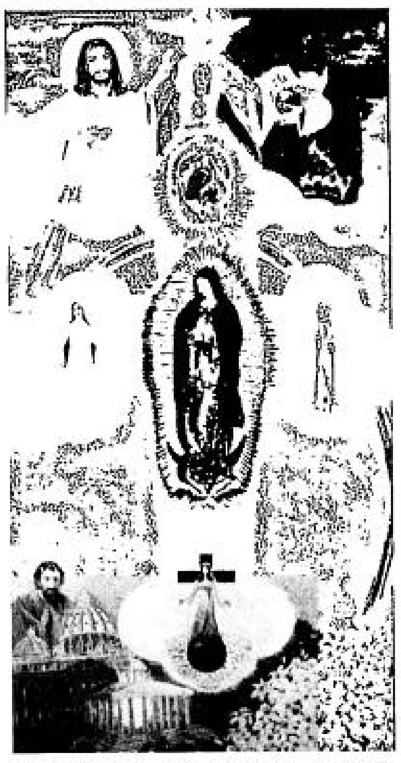
The hostage takers had given the Philippine government four days to meet two conditions in exchange for Tarongoy's release, namely, to recall all Filipino workers in Iraq and stop whatever cooperation it is giving to the United States military in Iraq.

An hour after the March 12 deadline, DFA spokesperson Gilbert Asuque announced that Tarongoy had been granted a reprieve.

Yesterday, Asuque said the DFA was still waiting for an update from Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, who leads the high-level Philippine team negotiating for Tarongoy's release with the help of ethnic and religious intermediaries in Iraq.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has likewise extended the life of the Presidential Middle East Preparedness Committee to ensure the government's responsiveness to the safety concerns of the 1.4 million overseas Filipino workers in the region as well as to continue the efforts to secure the release of Tarongoy, according to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

Corrections



IN THE FIRST edition of the March 24 issue, a photo caption on Page A14 erroneously identified the creator of a painting of the Luminous Cross with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the center as Rommel Salvacion. The painting was done by Aia Halili.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the Correction Box on Page A6 misspelled the last name of the priest, one of the founders of the Missionaries of Jesus, who appeared on a front page photo of the Rostro de Jesus sculpture in the March 24 issue. The priest's name is Fr. Melanio Viuya—not Voiuya.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 28, 2005
Octave of Easter, Monday
1st Reading: Acts 2:14,22-33
Gospel: Matthew 28:8-15

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, left the tomb at once in holy fear, yet with great joy, and they ran to tell the news to the disciples.

Suddenly, Jesus met them on the way and said, "Peace." The women approached him, embraced his feet and worshiped him. But Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to set out for Galilee; there they will see me."

While the women were on their way, the guards returned to the city and some of them reported to the chief priests all that had happened. The chief priests met with the Jewish authorities and decided to give the soldiers a good sum of money, with this instruction, "Say that his disciples came by night while you were asleep, and stole the body of Jesus. If Pilate comes to know of this, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." The soldiers accepted the money and did as they were told. This story has circulated among the Jews until this day.

Commentary

The women who have come to the tomb and found it empty, obey the angels' words and leave to bring the news of the Resurrection to the disciples. And in obeying the word of God they meet Jesus coming towards them on the road with the word of Resurrection: Peace! Jesus' presence is worshipped and his words change the world forever: "Go tell my brothers to set out for Galilee, there they will see me." That phrase: 'my brothers' and those two words are a world of forgiveness, mercy, new life and freedom—from sin, from betrayal, from death into hope and newness of possibility for the future. In obeying the word of God we always meet the presence of God coming towards us and we are gifted with Peace and Forgiveness. We must practice resurrection and make sure all that we meet know the extent and power of that peace and reconciliation we have been given with our God.

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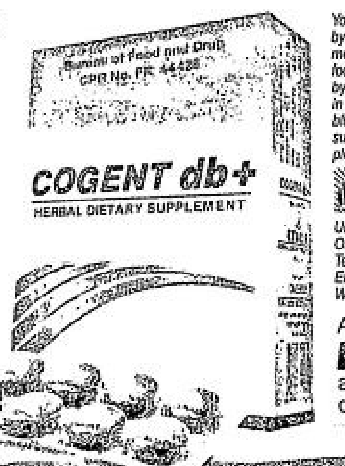
SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (CREDIT TRANSACTIONS)—Usury Law and Central Bank Circular No. 905—The laws in force at the time the contract was made generally govern the effectivity of its provision. The new promissory note was executed on May 6, 1982, prior to the effectivity of CB Circular No. 905 on January 1, 1983. At that time, The Usury Law, Act No. 2655, as amended by Presidential Decree No. 116, was still in force and effect. Under the Usury Law, no person shall receive a rate of interest, including commissions, premiums, fines and penalties, higher than 12 percent per annum or the maximum rate prescribed by the Monetary Board for a loan secured by a mortgage upon real estate the title to which is duly registered. In this case, by specific provision in the new promissory note, the restructured loan continued to be secured by the same mortgage contract executed on May 18, 1978, which covered real and personal properties of the respondents. Therefore, the 18 percent interest rate plus the additional interest and penalty charges of 18 percent and eight percent, respectively, are highly usurious. It should be noted that Central Bank Circular No. 905 did not repeal nor in any way amend the Usury Law but simply suspended the latter's effectivity. The illegality of usury is wholly the creature of legislation. A Central Bank Circular cannot repeal a law. Only a law can repeal another law. Thus, retroactive application of a Central Bank Circular cannot, and should not, be presumed. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Development Bank of the Philippines vs Perez, G. R. No. 148541, November 11, 2004] **By R. B. Vera**



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Our immune system is responsible for protecting the body against bacteria, viruses, and other organisms by creating antibodies, which react to foreign agents. The mechanism of the immune system is its ability to eliminate pathogens before they cause disease. Scientists believe that the fundamental cause of type 2 Diabetes is related to the immune system. In Diabetes mellitus, the immune system becomes depressed and this leads to increased vulnerability to pathogenic organisms.

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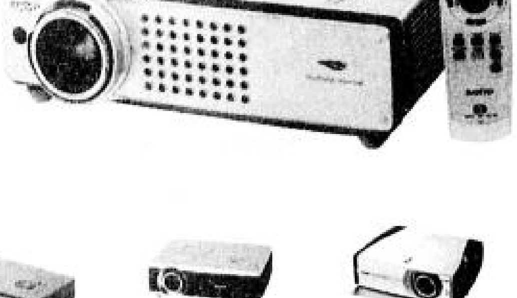

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World's parliamentarians go off to explore RP

By TJ Burgonio

SHRUGGING off jet lag, delegates to the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assembly in Manila took domestic flights and long bumpy bus rides in order to see the Philippine countryside.

Some 20 delegates from Switzerland, Finland and the Netherlands began flying in on Wednesday. But instead of staying in their hotel rooms in Manila, which virtually came to a standstill with the observance of Holy Week, they grabbed their backpacks and headed for the pristine beaches of Boracay, the rice terraces of Banawe and other tourist destinations.

The six-day IPU conference, which expects to gather 1,500 parliamentarians from over 130 countries in what is expected to be the country's biggest tourism event of the year, won't begin until April 3.

First to arrive

"The delegates from Finland who arrived last night hied off to Boracay today. The others went to Mindoro, Banawe, and Hidden Valley in Quezon," said Carmen Razon-Arceño, chair of the organizing committee for the hosting of the IPU, in an interview.

The first to arrive in the country was Hermann Burgi, a member of the Swiss Council of States, who flew in with his wife on March 23.

So far, none of the 1,500 participants, including 45 heads of parliament, who had confirmed their attendance had canceled their trip following travel advisories by the United Kingdom, United States and Australia warning of terror attacks in Metro Manila and Mindanao.

"So far we have not received any cancellations," said Arceño, who is also director general of the Office of International Relations and Protocol at the Senate.

Peace forum, etc.

This is the first time the Philippines is hosting the IPU assembly since it was established in 1889. An international organization comprised of the parliaments of sovereign states, the union serves as a forum for worldwide parliamentary dialogues, the establishment of democracy and peace in the world, among other objectives.

Topping next week's conference agenda is the protection of women and children, and migration. IPU assemblies are held twice a year. The next conference is set for September in Geneva.

The Cultural Center of the Philippines complex is undergoing a P17-million facelift in time for the assembly which will be held at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Over the past months, workers have been constructing asphalt roads in and around the CCP complex, putting in instant gardens and other landscaping work, installing lights, cleaning up the place, and repairing the neglected facades and interiors of the CCP and the PICC. *With Juliet Labog-Javellana*

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Philippine National Police officials had exhorted erring policemen to atone for their shortcomings by participating in Lenten rites commemorating the suffering of Jesus Christ. One such unidentified officer heeded the call, albeit wearing a crown of yarn and having himself strapped to a cross with the nails driven between his fingers not through his palm. REUTERS

PNP seeks professionals

Luige A. del Puerto

WANTED: Police.

The police are hiring 187 professionals to fill its need for lawyers, chaplains, chemists, forensic experts and electronic engineers.

Successful applicants will join the PNP Legal Service, Chaplain Service, Crime Laboratory and Computer Service.

But would professionals even consider joining an organization hounded by accusations of nonprofessionalism and corruption? What would be in it for them?

"The chance to serve the people," said PNP spokesperson Sr. Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, aside from getting a job, of course.

"You will also be joining the police with the rank of senior inspector (equivalent to captain in the military) or inspector (equivalent to lieutenant)," Bataoil said.

Compared to the salary offered in the private sector, Bataoil admitted that their pay package was not that attractive.

A senior inspector gets P17,300, while an inspector receives P16,600 in basic monthly salary.

"The pay is not that high compared to the private sector, but it will surely improve when the economy improves," Bataoil said.

"And it's a job they can be proud of," he added.

He said the police are looking for professionals who had always wanted to be cops but did not get the chance when they were younger.

"What we want are people who love to do police work. We prefer those who want to make this a lifetime profession. If you were not able to make it in the PNPA (police academy) or other sources of commission, now is your chance to become a cop," Bataoil said.

Almost half of the available positions—84 to be exact—are for lawyers, the police said.

"Lawyers commissioned into the police service through lateral entry will be appointed to the initial rank of police senior inspector. The PNP envisions to have at least one legal officer [in] each police regional office and police provincial office nationwide," the PNP Directorate for Personnel and Records Management said in a statement.

The Crime Laboratory needs four medico-legal officers and 49 forensic and chemical officers.

The police also need 25 chaplains and 25 electronics and communication engineers.

Applicants must be 21 to 30 years old, and at least 1.62 meters tall for males and 1.57 meters tall for females. There will be a series of tests, including neuropsychiatric and drug tests.

'Ligtas Buntis' foe launches own campaign

By Christian V. Esguerra

A RESIGNED Department of Health official has organized a nationwide "counter-Ligtas Buntis" campaign to spread "the truth" about the controversial government reproductive health program.

Ligaya Acosta, erstwhile media officer and natural family planning program officer, has so far spoken out against the program in Cebu, Bacolod, Iloilo, Davao and Cagayan de Oro cities.

She was accompanied by American pro-life activist Dr. Brian Clowes, who had exposed the US government's purported hand in population control efforts in Third World countries, and Dr. Rene Bullecer of Human Life International.

"We're getting very positive responses," Acosta told the INQUIRER Saturday. "They're (people) finally realizing that they are being deceived by the government."

Clowes joined the campaign ostensibly to reach a wider audience for his exposé on the "Kissinger Report" that purportedly identified the Philippines as one of 13 developing countries whose populations the US was intent on controlling for commercial purposes.

Much of Acosta's lectures were focused on what she claimed was the "deceptive" nature of Ligtas Buntis, the P150-million program the DOH had set to end on March 31.

In her lecture modules titled "The Truth about DOH's Ligtas Buntis," she alleged that the program would actually end on Dec. 31, after which it would be "integrated" into the public health system. Eventually, it would be "institutionalized" in the country, she said.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit has repeatedly explained that the program is nothing more than an effort to educate the public on reproductive health and prevent maternal and child deaths due to misguided pregnancies.

Unconvinced, Acosta ended her 29-year service at the DOH, resigning as its spokesperson for Eastern Visayas last month.

World Expo seen to boost tourism

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism is determined to lure more foreign tourists through the Philippine pavilion it put up at the World Exposition 2005, which opened in Aichi, Japan, on Good Friday.

This year's World Expo theme is "Nature's Wisdom" and highlights the need to pursue sustainable development worldwide that is harmonious with the environment.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said the World Expo, being the first international fair in the 21st century, is expected to attract people from many countries and create an excellent platform for addressing various environmental concerns such as energy conservation.

The Philippine pavilion, Durano said, features the coconut as the inspiration for all its designs and creative elements, working around the slogan: "Usbong: Seeds of Life."

The pavilion showcases various aspects of Philippine life and culture, from its cuisine and export products to the success stories in environmental conservation in selected Philippine communities.

The DOT expects at least 1.5 million visitors, predominantly Japanese, as a result of its participation in the fair, which is expected to see 15 million visitors throughout its run which ends on Sept. 25.

The main fair will be held in Nagakute, east of Nagoya City. Some events will be held in the nearby cities of Seto and Toyota, the birthplace and headquarters of Toyota Motor Corp.

The DOT is projecting the Philippines in Japan as the "Premium Resort Islands," part of the agency's market-specific campaign which advertises in the target country's native language and uses the local media for distribution.

Japan is the Philippines largest source of foreign tourists, with more than 382,000 visitors in 2004. The DOT is aiming for 481,000 Japanese tourists this year and, ultimately, a million by 2008.

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Roxas acts vs invasion of privacy by phone firms

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. MAR Roxas has sought a Senate inquiry into the practice of telecommunication companies barraging their subscribers with "unsolicited promotional messages" through their mobile phones, saying this could be an invasion of privacy.

Roxas filed Resolution 169 urging the Senate committee on public services to look into the practice of telecom firms and third-party content providers of randomly sending "uninvited promotional messages."

"The mobile telephone is a personal communication device. We are duty-bound to safeguard the right of subscribers to privacy of communication," Roxas said in a statement.

Roxas, chair of the bicameral congressional oversight committee on Electronic Commerce Law, said the law protects subscribers "with regard to privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and content control."

The US-based Wireless Advertising Association had declared that offensive messages include those intentionally sent to a subscriber's mobile phone "without explicit permission and without clear identification of the sender."

The forging of a message originator and the forwarding of chain messages were also branded as offensive by the group.

A number of bills have been filed in the Senate and House of Representatives seeking to prohibit mobile telephone operators from transmitting "unsolicited materials" to subscribers.

The US Congress recently passed a law banning unwanted messages to mobile phones unless there was prior permission from the subscriber.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. earlier said the National Telecommunications Commission has failed to protect subscribers from unfair trade practices because its hands are tied by legal suits filed by telecommunication companies.

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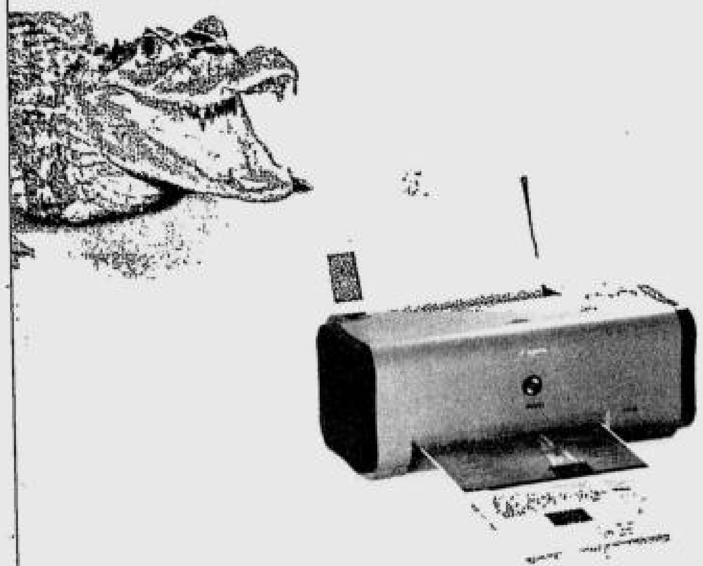

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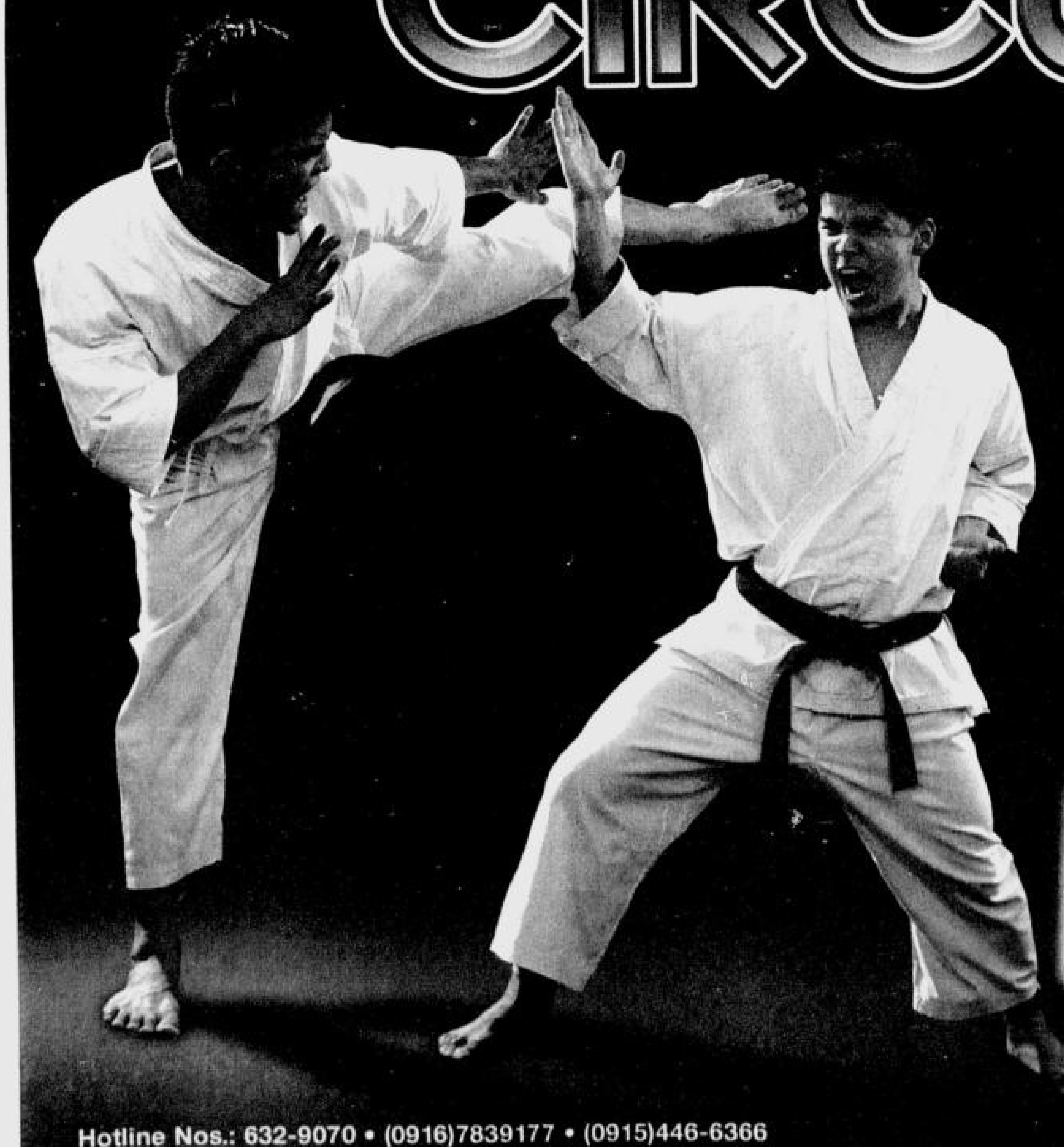

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Another car bomb attack stuns Beirut

BEIRUT—The jittery Lebanese capital was stunned late Saturday by another firey bomb blast that killed two people in a Christian quarter on Easter eve as the country grappled with political deadlock and fears of a resurgence of sectarian strife.

It was the third bomb attack in a Christian neighborhood in a week and the second in which Indian workers accounted for the fatalities.

The explosion occurred at a moment of extreme political tension in Lebanon, which has been without a permanent government for a month and as neighboring Syria's military influence begins to wane under intense Lebanese and international pressure.

Opposition politicians again pointed a finger at the security services controlled by the pro-Syrian government, accusing them of seeking to foment confessional unrest as Syria withdraws its troops from the country.

Some opposition MPs and outside observers have speculated that the recent spate of attacks is aimed at provoking instability in order to justify a continued Syrian military presence.

A police officer said Saturday's explosion in an industrial area near Dekouaneh was caused by a car bomb that set several buildings ablaze in what one witness described as "an apocalyptic sight."

The official ANI news agency said the two fatalities were Indian nationals, adding that eight people were wounded, including a Sri Lankan. Lebanon has a sizeable Asian community, most of them employed as domestic workers.

Beirut has been on edge since 11 people were wounded when a bomb exploded beneath a car in Jdeide March 19, an attack that was followed by a blast in Kaslik north of here on Wednesday that killed three, including two Indian nationals.

"It's a provocation against civil peace," said opposition leader Walid Jumblatt of the latest blast, the third since the Feb. 14 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

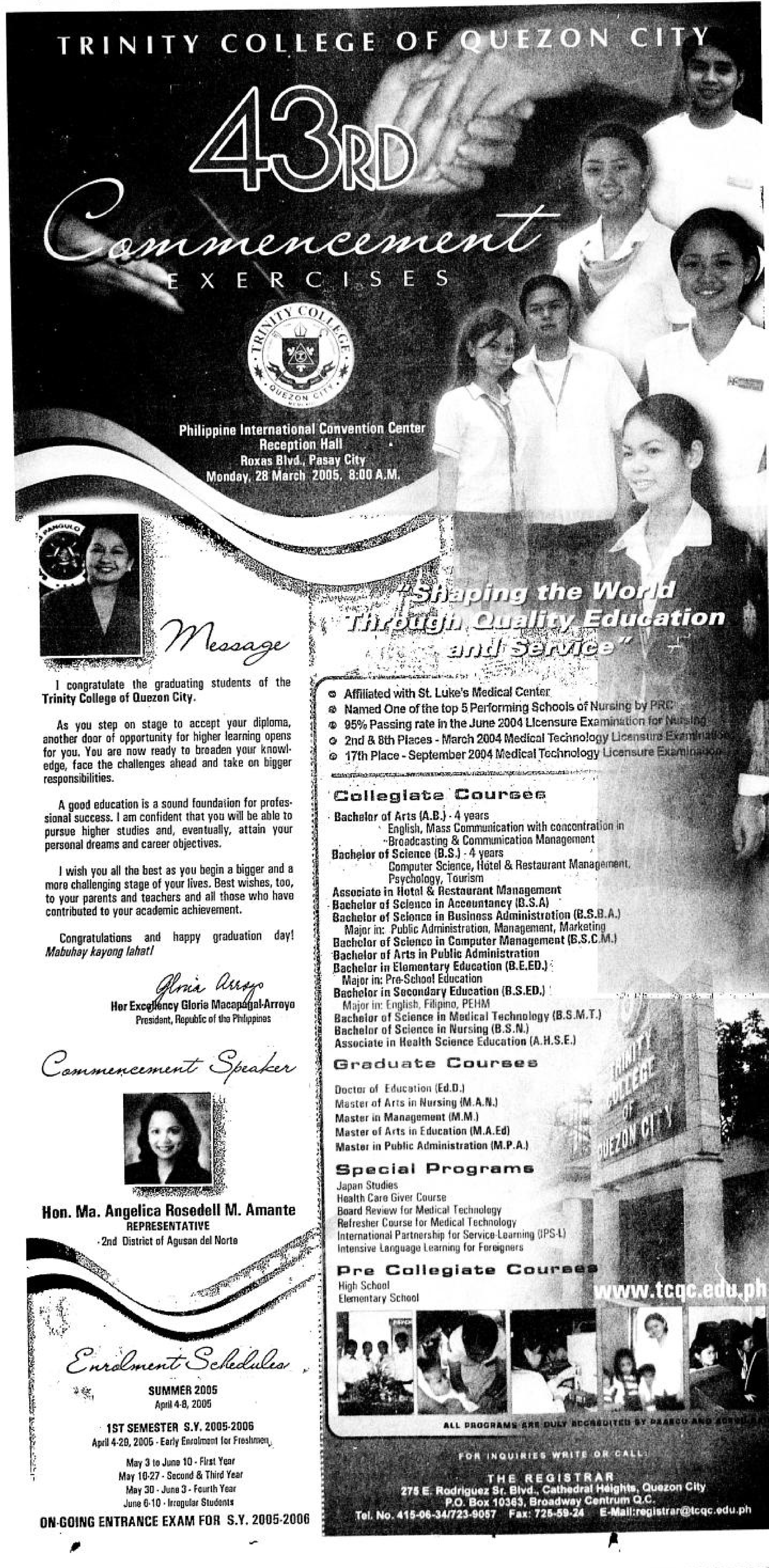
"A new leadership is absolutely necessary to take matters in hand. The current leadership, which is collapsing, is trying to defend itself by terrorist means," Jumblatt charged.

"The (security) services are trying to sow terror by striking in Christian areas but their plan will not succeed."

Another opposition figure, Walid Eido, accused Lebanese security services and said the attack represented a "criminal intent to plunge the country into chaos—politically, economically and with regard to security."

Jumblatt called again for the heads of Lebanon's security services to be sacked, a demand that Lebanese President Emile Lahoud is now about to take, according to the newspaper Al-Mustaqbal, controlled by Hariri partisans.

Like other media outlets belonging to the slain premier's family empire, the paper is now guarded by security force personnel and the Qatar-based satellite channel Al-Jazeera said Sunday that its Beirut bureau had received threats over its coverage of the latest blast. *AFP*



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PRINCE Rainier of Monaco (right) and Princess Grace pose Feb. 4, 1965, with their children, Prince Albert (right) and Princess Caroline (center), after Princess Stephanie was born. Prince Rainier, the 81-year-old ruler of Monaco, was fighting for his life in intensive care, his vital organs failing and an artificial respirator keeping him alive. AFP

Rainier's condition worsens, says Palace

MONACO—Hopes began to fade Saturday for Monaco's 81-year-old ruler Prince Rainier, as the palace said his condition was still deteriorating despite intensive care, with his heart, lungs and kidneys all failing.

"The state of health of His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III is continuing to worsen. Despite the best available care and the control of the heart and lung infection, his heart, lung and kidney functions are gradually deteriorating," a bulletin said.

"The prognosis remains extremely guarded," it added.

The statement was issued soon after Pope John Paul II, himself seriously ill, sent a special blessing to the prince, saying he was "trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary."

Rainier III, Europe's longest reigning monarch, was rushed into intensive care on Tuesday when his health took a dramatic turn for the worse.

He was in Monaco's heart and thorax center, where he has been undergoing treatment since March 7 for a recurrent breathing problem.

The prince's three children by his late wife, the US film star Grace Kelly, have been taking turns at his bedside, and he has also received visits from Monaco's archbishop and a parish priest.

His only son, the bachelor Prince Albert, 47, is his heir.

"Informed of the health problems affecting Your Serene Highness, the Holy Father joins with you in thought and prayer with warm wishes towards you," said the Pope's message signed by his secretary of state Cardinal Angelo Sodano.

"Trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the Pope asks the Lord to give (Rainier) the comfort and support of his grace, and grants him a heartfelt and special apostolic blessing to him and his family," the message, released by the Vatican press office, added.

On Friday evening, Albert, his elder sister Princess Caroline and her husband Prince Ernst-August of Hanover briefly appeared at the palace's balcony as a group taking part in a Good Friday procession marched below.

On Saturday, two of Caroline's four children, Andrea, 20, and Pierre, 17, also visited their grandfather at his bedside.

Rainier is the second longest-reigning monarch in the world after Thailand's 75-year-old Bhumibol Adulyadej, who became king in 1946 at the age of 18.

Rainier came to the throne in the tiny Mediterranean territory in 1949, three years before Britain's Queen Elizabeth II succeeded her father.

After years as a jet-setting playboy, he boosted the glamour quotient of his little state when he married Kelly in 1956. She died in a car crash in the principality in 1982.

Monaco was founded when Rainier's Grimaldi dynasty took control of the principality in 1297. The family was deposed after the French Revolution when Monaco was united with France, but restored by treaty in 1861.

The principality has a population of around 32,000, many of them ultra-rich residents enjoying its tax-haven benefits.

Much of its image and financial success of the second-smallest state in Europe after the Holy See has been credited to Prince Rainier, who oversaw building projects, brought in the Formula One motor race, and fostered Monaco's reputation as an exclusive playground for the rich and famous.

With Prince Albert's bachelor status—and persistent rumors, denied, that he is gay—casting a question over the Grimaldi family's rule, Prince Rainier in 2002 changed Monaco's constitution to allow the offspring of his daughters, Caroline, 48, and Stephanie, 40, to enter the line of succession. *AFP*

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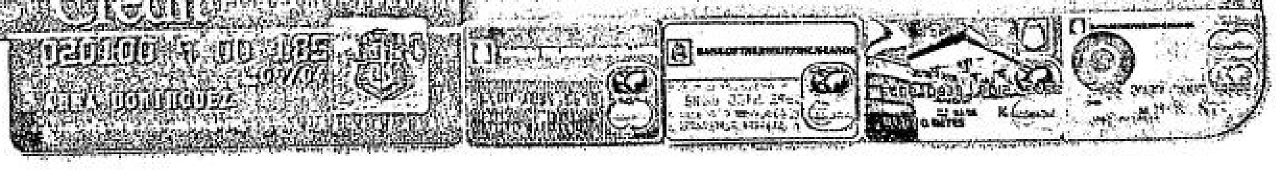

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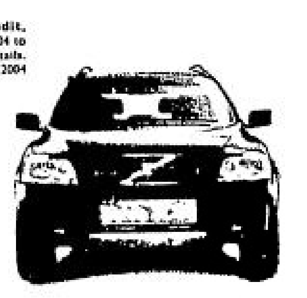

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Deaths rise as Angola grapples with Ebola-like virus outbreak

LUANDA—Angola on Saturday anxiously awaited the arrival of foreign medical experts sent to check the spread of a killer virus, as the death toll from an outbreak of the Ebola-like Marburg disease rose to 120 and the epidemic spread to a new region.

"The situation is critical," said Deputy Health Minister Jose Van-Dumen, returning from a two-day field visit to the province of Uige in northern Angola, which has been worst hit by the highly contagious disease.

"This is extremely serious, strong preventative measures are needed to contain this outbreak of Marburg disease," he said late Friday.

A health ministry official said a pregnant woman died of the Marburg virus in a hospital in the northern province of Cabinda on Saturday, the first fatality outside the capital Luanda and the province of Uige, bringing the nationwide death toll to 120 in less than six months.

"I can confirm that today (Saturday), a woman died in the hospital in Cabinda from hemorraghic Marburg fever," Filomeno Forte, the head of the health ministry's epidemiology department, told AFP.

"This woman came from Uige, where there had been a death in the family from Marburg. She did not disclose the information when she arrived in Cabinda," located about 500 kilometers west of Uige and 300 kilometers north of Luanda.

"It is the first and only case of Marburg in Cabinda," said Forte. *AFP*

EASTER IN SHANGHAI

Chinese Catholics wait for an Easter Sunday Mass at the state-sanctioned Saint Peter's Church in Shanghai March 27. About 25 million Chinese are registered in state-approved Christian churches, while an estimated 40 million worship in underground churches. China forbids organized worship outside designated religious organizations. REUTERS

WORLDBRIEFS

Kyrgyszstan turmoil

BISHKEK—Kyrgyzstan's new leaders appeared on Sunday to have survived an initial challenge to their power from a disaffected ex-police chief but the situation in the Central Asian state remained clouded by uncertainty. A day of turmoil and confusion, including talk of civil war and assassination, may deepen concern among authoritarian leaders in neighboring Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The region, rich in oil and gas deposits, is viewed with keen interest by both Moscow and Washington. Russia, which has traditionally seen Central Asia as its sphere of influence, signaled it was ready to provide help. On Saturday, ousted interior minister and ex-police chief Keneshbek Dushebayev led a march on the capital to condemn the overthrow of president Askar Akayev, declaring: "The country is virtually split and everything is in place for a civil war." However, as night fell in the mountainous former Soviet republic, security chief Felix Kulov said the 3,000 marchers had failed to gain support along their route and had dispersed. *Reuters*

Bush hit on US shooting

CRAWFORD, Texas—President George W. Bush broke his public silence on Saturday about the deadliest US school shooting in six years, touting the government's response "at this tragic time" after some American Indian leaders complained he paid little attention to the rampage. Bush's delayed public reaction to the shooting stood in contrast to his swift and high-profile intervention earlier this week to try to prolong the life of Terri Schiavo, a brain-damaged woman in Florida whose feeding tube was removed. Bush's job-approval rating has sunk to the lowest level of his presidency in the latest national survey, with some pollsters citing a public backlash against his intervention in the Schiavo case. In his first public comments on Monday's school shooting, Bush decried the "tragedy" in which a 16-year-old boy killed nine people and then himself on a Minnesota Indian reservation. Bush, on vacation at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, credited school security guard Derrick Brun for saving the lives of students by confronting the young gunman, before being killed. *Reuters*

3 GIs killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Three US soldiers were killed in Iraq as security forces said they had arrested 120 people on suspicion of planning attacks on the country's Shiite majority ahead of a major religious holiday. Against the backdrop of increased bloodshed, the country's parliament planned to reconvene Tuesday to elect a speaker as talks between Kurds and Shiites on forming a government foundered. The latest car bombing against US forces, in the capital's tense southwest, killed two patrolling US soldiers and wounded two others, the US military said. A Marine was killed in action Friday in the restive Al-Anbar province, west of the capital, another statement said, without providing further details. The latest casualties brought to 1,518 the number of US military personnel killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion over two years ago, according to a Pentagon tally. *AFP*

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Schiavo kin lose more court battles

PINELLAS PARK, Florida—An advocate for Terri Schiavo's parents acknowledged late Saturday they had exhausted all judicial means to save their brain-damaged daughter's life, but appealed once more to Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to intervene and take her into protective custody.

"You do have the authority to stop the killing of Terri Schiavo, within your executive office. We beg you to have courage and take action," priest Paul O'Donnell, an advocate for the parents Bob and Mary Schindler, told Bush—brother to US President George W. Bush.

Just a short while before, Florida's Supreme Court said it had refused to order the 41-year-old woman's feeding tube reinserted, while a family spokesperson, Randall Terry, told AFP: "It appears there's no more judicial pursuit happening."

Earlier in the day, the grief-stricken parents of Terri, Bob and Mary Schindler, appealed to the state's top court after a US state judge rejected their latest attempt to keep the woman alive—against the wishes of her husband and the courts themselves. *AFP*

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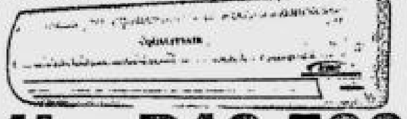

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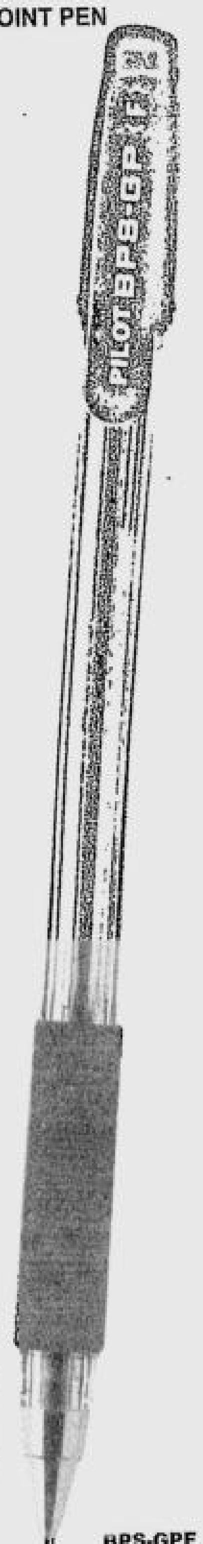

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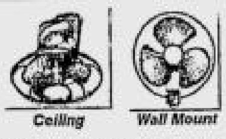

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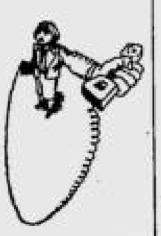

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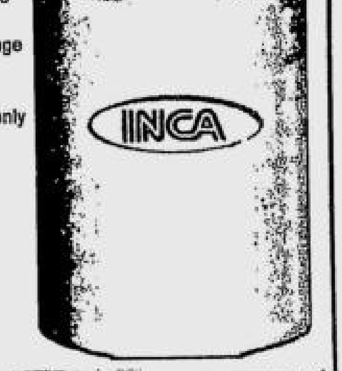

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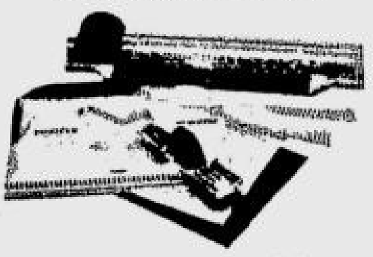

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Philips and the path towards Sense and Simplicity

For over a century, consumers around the world have trusted Philips to make things better. Our rich array of products has been a staple in many households for generations. It is our great pride that still we remain part of your homes and lives today.

At present, Philips continues to take its consumers' needs and wants to heart. In fact, we have invested so much in this endeavor that we have evolved into one of the top 100 Global Brands according to the latest Business Week/Interbrand survey.

From hereon, we reaffirm our commitment to our consumers with a new brand promise that will be the guiding force behind our ventures in Healthcare, Lifestyle and Enabling Technology. "Sense and Simplicity" is our new motto and we promise to carry on this ideal in all our pursuits.

"Sense and Simplicity" is key

Just how significant is sense and simplicity to Philips? It is so important that it has influenced the way we think, do business and interact with our consumers. It is compass that guides our short and long-term goals. And it is the gold standard by which our products abide by.

This is because Philips believes that no matter how complex or advanced a product or solution is, it should be simple to use and make sense. Technology is here to help us make our lives easier and more productive. It shouldn't confuse us. It should not make us waste our time reading the manual for hours to figure out how to assemble, operate and fix a product.

We also believe that once our product is off the shelf and out of the box, it should immediately work for you. It must meet a direct need and add value. It must anticipate your needs with intuitive features that you can maximize to your advantage. It also has to be simple and sensible enough to create an enhanced experience for you, the end-user.

We don't want our products and solutions to gather dust on your countertop because they are too cumbersome to operate or too limiting in scope of use. We want them to serve their purpose and more. We want them to serve you better.

Sense and simplicity in every Philips experience

Philips is able to implement the new brand promise because we have developed a system that allows us to incorporate sense and simplicity into our products and solutions. Known as the three key filters, they inform and influence everything we do—from business processes to product creation.

• *Easy to Experience*

Life is complicated enough as it is. That is why Philips is making sure that its products and solutions are sophisticated yet easy to use and experience. We don't create fancy contraptions with extra bells and whistles that take you hours to master.

We know you don't have the patience for that and we don't either. That's why we're making things simpler while maintaining rigorous quality standards. It just makes much more sense.

• *Designed Around You*

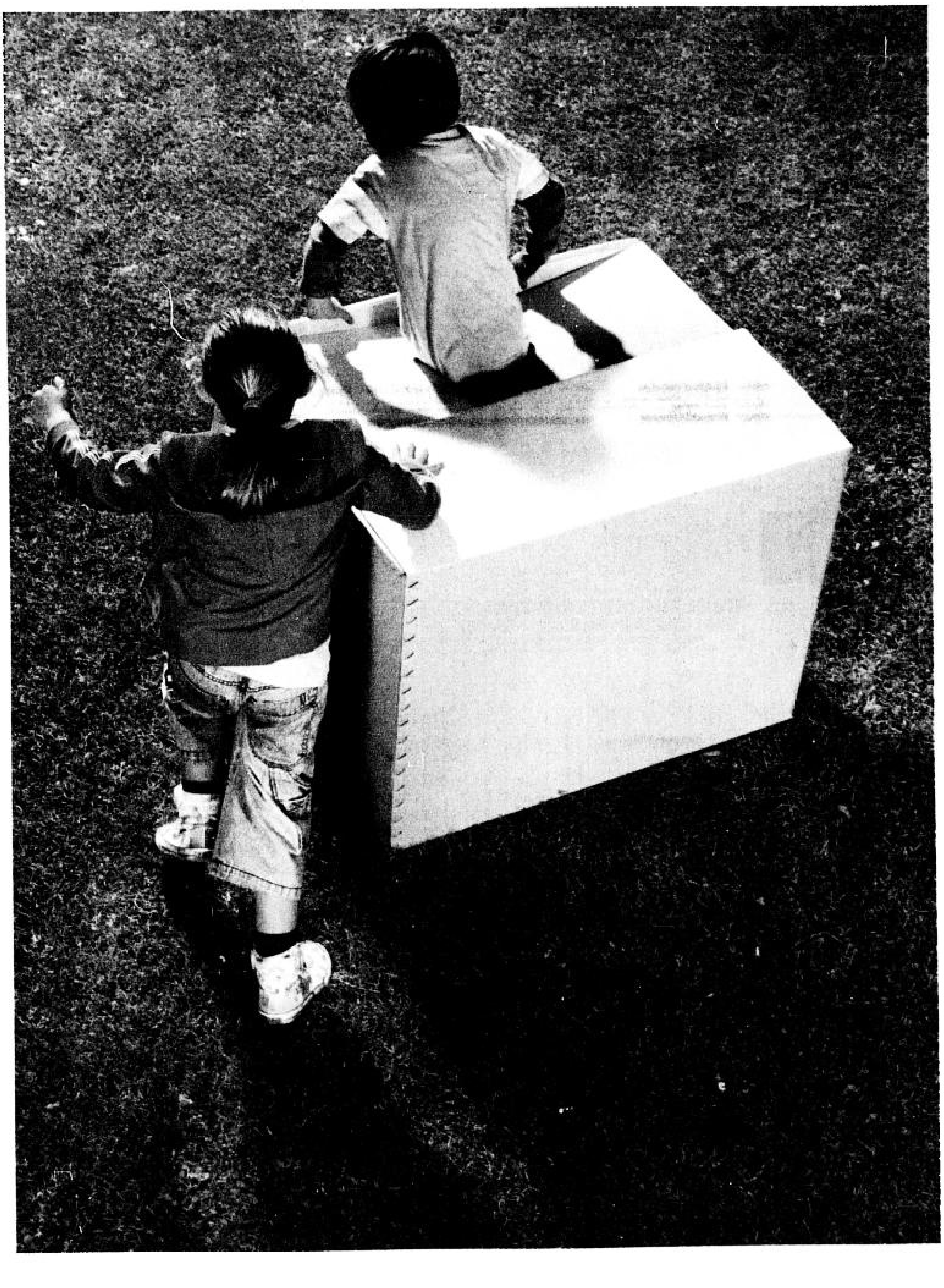
Philips goes through extra lengths to make sure that we diligently respond to your needs. We know you want systems that are intelligent, logical and adaptable to your present and future needs.

That is why we are developing intuitive products and solutions so you may fully experience the benefits of technology.

These are the kind that can be personalized to your taste, optimized to follow your pace, and designed to fit you just right.

• *Advanced*

Something is truly advanced when it improves people's lives. This is why we offer solutions that are smart yet simple. What good is high-tech gadgetry if it is does not improve the user experience? What good is a complex solution if it fails to meet the demands of the future?



Technology should be as simple as the box it comes in.

We believe technology can be advanced and simple at the same time. It can be easy to experience. It can be designed around people. Simplicity can be the goal of technology. It certainly is the goal at Philips. It just makes sense.

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PHILIPS

sense and simplicity

We at Philips are addressing these concerns with innovative and forward thinking solutions that can easily make sense to not only to technical geeks, but to ordinary consumers as well.

Philips makes good on its promise

At the heart of Philips' long term vision and mission is to improve the quality of people's lives through the timely introduction of meaningful technological innovations. That is why we turn to sense and simplicity. Inspired by this new brand promise, we are working hard to make sure that one day, every Philips product will provide consumers the sensible and simple solutions they need. Currently, we have an array of products that make good on this promise. They can be found in Philips' five product divisions, namely Consumer Electronics, Domestic Appliances, Medical Systems, Lighting, and Semiconductors.For Consumer Electronics, we have the Flat TV with Ambilight, a breakthrough in TV technology that revolutionizes the viewing experience by analyzing incoming television signals and producing background lighting that matches the images on screen—all in real time. With Philips' Flat TV with Ambilight, all you have to do is to enjoy the viewing experience as it extends beyond your screen.

For Domestic Appliances, there is Philishave Sensotech, the world's first intelligent shaving system. Just how smart is the Sensotech shaver? It lets you personalize your shave with a unique Personal Comfort Control dial. Choose from nine settings to help reduce friction and irritation with each gentle sweep of the shaving head. It also comes with a Super Lift & Cut system which lifts hair more efficiently from the skin and makes it possible to shave 15 micrometers shorter on average. Now that's a close shave!

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Then we have another medical wonder in Brilliance CT. With innovative features to optimize clinical performance and improve a patient's outcome, Brilliance CT's 40-channel configuration provides new possibilities in cardiology, oncology and radiology. It can do comprehensive organ assessment literally within seconds and in amazing high fidelity. Brilliance CT also allows a highly detailed scan that can help tremendously in accurate diagnosis.

Philips is also bringing its lighting technology to the people through city beautification. We believe that good lighting, especially in urban areas deters crime and vandalism, encourages commerce and advertising, and allows people to extend their leisure hours from day till night. The new floodlight systems used on the Eiffel Tower with a lifespan of two decades is a stunning example of Philips' innovative and forward-thinking technology.

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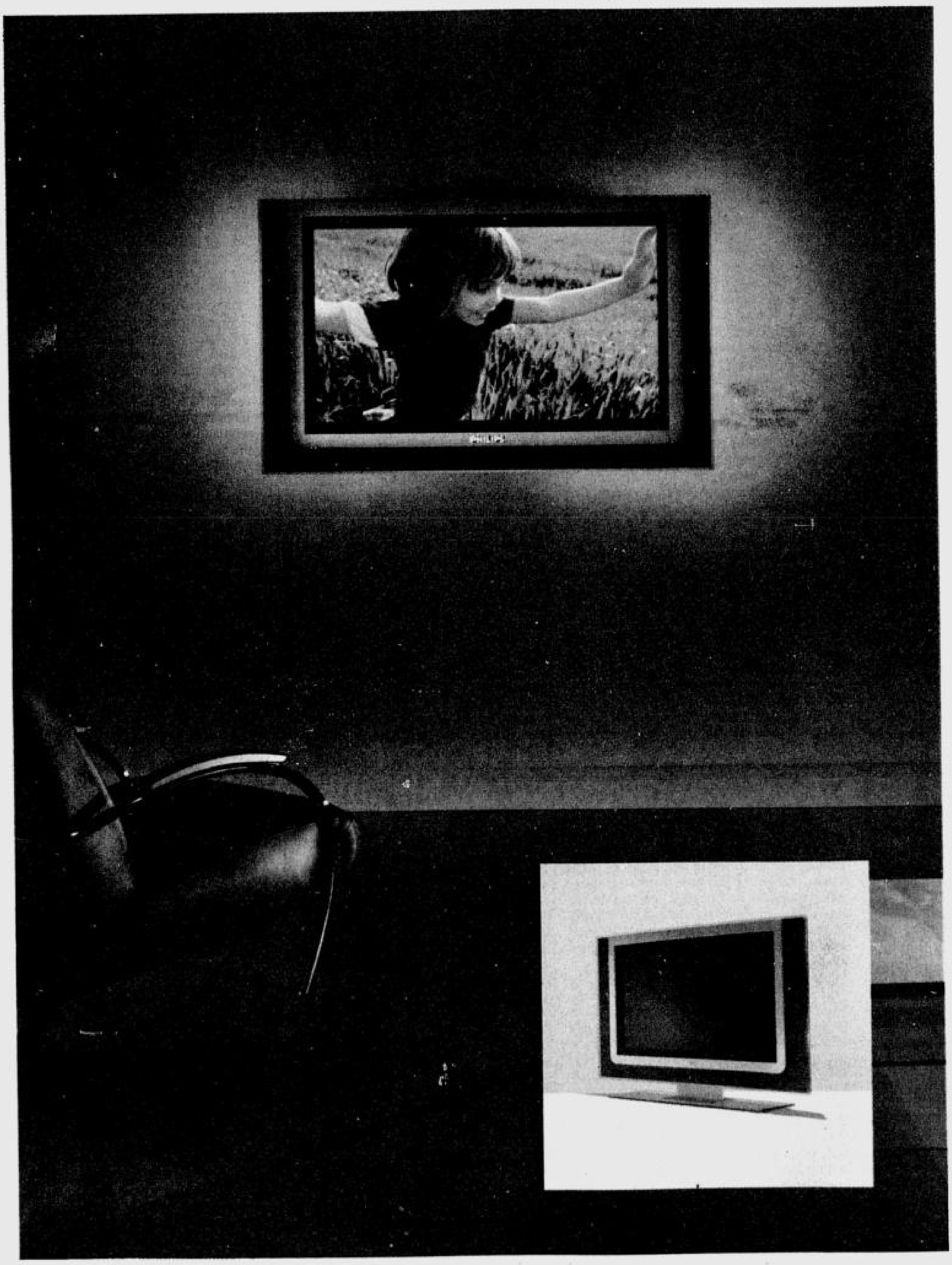
So whatever the future holds, rest assured that Philips will be with you every step of the way.



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Change the rhetoric

EDITORIAL

Quite predictably, the President's Easter Message used the resurrection story of the Christian gospels to relate a nation-building narrative. Given the country's religious history and unchanging demographics, this is a traditional rhetorical tactic used by our presidents and their speechwriters. All the same, however, this year's Easter Message got it all wrong.

It is based on a misunderstanding of the Christian faith. It proceeds from a basic misconception about the uses of rhetoric. The net effect, to use a dismissive turn of phrase that is uniquely Filipino, is language that is "trying hard."

The five-paragraph statement, written in Filipino and English, starts off familiarly enough by bringing together old need and new hope. The President's oft-repeated description of the current year as one of "urgent change" is restated—somewhat clumsily, we must say—as "*taon ng kailangang-kailangang pagbabago*." The traditional description of Easter Sunday as a day of hope is also repeated: "*ang bagong pag-asang sinasagisag ng dakilang araw na ito*."

The idea, clearly, is to shed light on current events through a reconsideration of the truths of a religious milestone. We do not quarrel with this objective. Done right, it is an effective way to communicate fundamental truths.

But the President's Easter Message is misconceived, because it is based on the assumption that all a writer needs to do to bring past and present together is to put them side by side.

This explains the rhetorical disaster in the second paragraph: "Christ's passion gave birth to a new man; so too our struggle for urgent change will find transformation into a new nation with more jobs, cleaner environment, safer streets, more investments, and freedom from the ills of crushing debt, endless poverty, and vile corruption."

We have no doubt that these priority items in the national agenda were on the President's prayer list during Holy Week. But presented this way, as Caesar's equivalent of God's mission on earth, the President's hope that "our struggle for urgent change will find transformation" is inadequate and unconvincing.

Why? Because the equation of the Christian faith's "new Adam" with our desire for "a new nation" is a false one. They are truths on very different levels. (In other words, "Christ's passion" and "more investments" do not fit in the same sentence.)

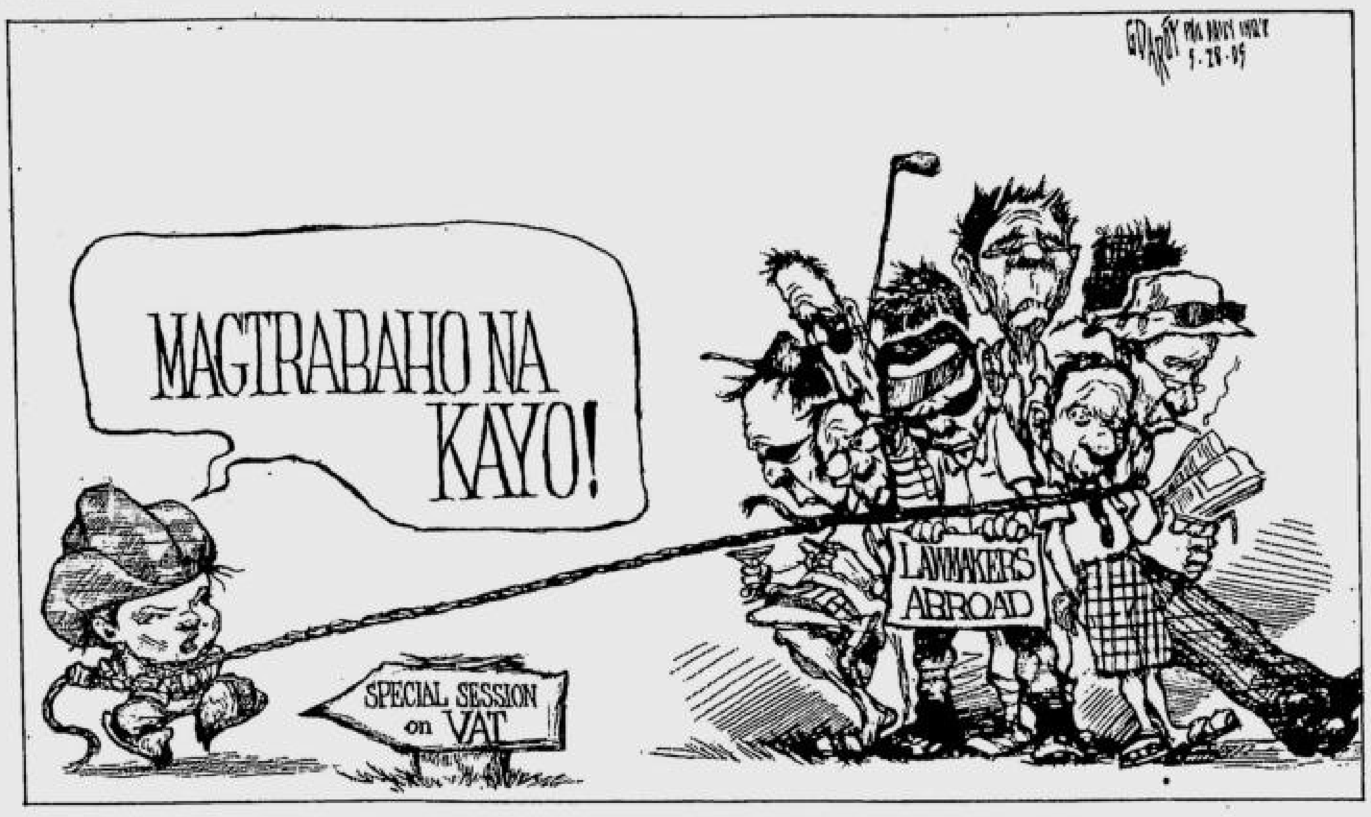
The fourth paragraph is another disaster. It begins with a prayer that the love of God reign in our hearts, so that truly meaningful change can be attained. But the rest of the paragraph is a misunderstanding, a caricature, of the Christian faith. It is true that, in Christian belief, the kingdom of God will appear only when God's love rules every human heart. But the Palace statement mistakes the "love of God" for a motherhood principle, something ingenuous and unobjectionable, rather like "national unity" or "reconciliation." And it disingenuously substitutes "meaningful change" (that is to say, a thriving economy, a corruption-free government, and other national goals devoutly to be wished for) for the change in heart that the Christian faith demands.

As the Gospels, the rest of the New Testament, and Church history tell us, the active pursuit of the "love of God" may mean terrible difficulties for the faithful. It is not a "feel-good" phrase, an idle wish; it is a command that brings both peace and division. And the change in heart that the Christian faith demands is independent of the change in the social order that the country desperately needs.

In the last paragraph, the President's Easter Message uses the sports-derived language of business to belabor its point. "We must stay the course, as Christ did, to eventual triumph. We must stay the course until the Philippines has turned the corner." But the New Testament itself offers similar but hallowed language for conveying the same meaning: running the race, fighting the good fight. Why did the President's speechwriters fail to use it?

It is not because they wanted to use neutral language. The occasion of the message, and the very next line, gives the lie to that. "In the end, the weak-willed and the self-serving will be changed or cast off." This is obviously an attempt to appropriate the phrasing of biblical language.

They failed to use it, and thus failed the President, because they did not do their homework.



How cartels are killing us softly

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE CONSTITUTION requires the government to prevent monopolies, cartels and restraints in trade. Failure to obey the Constitution opens the head of government to removal from office through impeachment. We have cartels in three basic industries—oil, cement, and pharmaceuticals—yet, the present administration is not doing anything to stop them. Worse, the government itself is aiding and abetting their nefarious activities.

Monopolies and cartels hamper free trade and competition. A monopoly is a corporation that monopolizes an industry; a cartel or oligopoly is a group of corporations that have banded together to dictate prices.

Examples: Petron, Shell and Caltex form a cartel; they sell their products—meaning, those of the same kind—at the same prices. The government passed the Oil Deregulation Law to encourage other oil companies to compete against each other in order to force prices down. But Congress and President Fidel V. Ramos so diluted the law that it made the situation worse. The Big Three still monopolizes 90 percent of the local oil market. But the new players, instead of competing with them, have instead joined the cartel. The oil supply of the cartel members comes from a much bigger international cartel, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which fixes the available quantity and price of oil in the world market. The result is the continuing escalation in the prices of fuel.

The cement industry is monopolized by four big international cement conglomerates that have gobbled up almost all the Filipino-owned cement companies. The cartel fixes the supply and price of cement; it even prevents competition from cheaper cement imports through the protective tariff that the Department of Trade and Industry obligingly imposed at the cartel's insistence. Result: the high price of cement that makes the cost of construction, and even of "low-cost" housing, very expensive and beyond the reach of the poor and lower middle class.

The pharmaceutical industry that produces the medicine for the sick is dominated by a cartel (of multinational companies) that fixes astronomically high medicine prices, making our prices here the highest in Asia and the world—and yet, we are a poverty-stricken nation. The cartel is joined by another foreign corporation that manufactures all the branded medicines of the multinationals. Worse, the distribution and retail of the medicines are monopolized by a giant drugstore chain that has effectively killed most of the small family-owned *boticas* and *farmacias*. The cartel controls 80 percent of the drug market, while the drugstore chain also controls 80 percent of the retail market.

Result: Medicine is beyond the reach of most Filipinos and many patients die needlessly for this reason.

These three cartels are composed of foreign corporations—not Filipino companies—that send the money they collect from Filipinos to their mother companies abroad. Because of their sizes—and government negligence—they have killed Filipino competition.

These three industries are very important. Oil keeps the factories, and the transportation industry that brings their products to the consumers, running. The price of fuel therefore has a chain effect on the prices of all other products. Cement is a basic ingredient in all construction projects—roads, bridges, buildings, houses, etc. But the most important is medicine because it is crucial to the life and health of the people.

What is the government doing? The Oil Deregulation Law—undeniably a big mistake—is being reviewed although the government is taking an excruciatingly long time doing it. All sectors, except the government, believe that it should either be repealed or amended.

On the cement problem, the government is not doing anything. On the contrary, the cement cartel is urging the government to again extend the protective tariff against imports, and the Department of Trade and Industry is taking a long time rejecting that petition.

The unkindest cut is in the medicine problem. The government, through the Bureau of Food and Drug, is helping the cartel by entertaining petitions for the extension of patents on certain medicines, instead of rejecting them. In effect, our own BFAD is an ally of the cartel in killing Filipinos softly through the high cost of medicines.

Recognizing the price-fixing being done by the cartel, four congressmen have filed House Bill 3830, which would create a Price Regulatory Board to control the prices of medicines. In a privilege speech, Rep. Ferjenel G. Biron (Kampi, 4th district, Iloilo), one of the bill's sponsors, denounced the "greed of the giant multinational pharmaceutical companies and that of the largest drugstore chain in the Philippines" as behind the uncontrollable rise in the prices of medicines.

Biron knows what he is talking about. He is a doctor of medicine, and he once owned interests in a modest drugstore retail chain and a pharmaceutical manufacturing and distribution company. He explained how the cartel operates:

The parent companies of these multinationals impose on their Philippine subsidiaries a mark-up profit. In the absence of government regulatory control, these subsidiaries ensure their own profitability by imposing their own unrestrained mark-up, including a huge allowance for marketing. The retailers, in turn, are allowed another 10-percent mark-up.

But what is shocking is what the multinationals are being forced to do. That will be exposed in the next installment.

Lifelong pauses

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LAST Wednesday afternoon, I was treated, or subjected, to something I hadn't heard in some time. It was a *pasyon*, a dolorous and repetitive wailing of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. It began shortly after lunch. A group of elderly women had pitched tent beside the guardhouse of our compound and, armed with quite powerful loudspeakers, were dolorously and repetitively wailing away in a very good simulation of Christ's pain.

The repetitive is not an exaggeration, the exercise adding whole new dimensions to the word. From when it began to about 5 p.m., the *pasyonistas* sang only one short refrain again and again. Well, if you listen to the blues, you can get the same sensation. The old blues anyway, which is unrelieved by elaborate guitar licks or a sacrilegious straying away from three chords. Maybe that's why they call it the blues. I've seen Africans as well celebrate their feasts by dancing for several days to the beat of an elusive tune pounded out from a host of drums. After a while you feel like a zombie, you want to raise your arms and obey any hypnotic suggestion.

The *pasyon* refrain was buzzing in my ears well before five o'clock. Just as I was about to seek refuge by going to the grocery, they suddenly changed the tune. My gratefulness was short-lived. The new lead singer, who keened into the microphone loud enough to be heard by the dead, was out of tune. I thought at first she just got lost in the transition and would hit the right notes eventually. But, no, she kept going to Antipolo while everyone else was going to Quiapo. I consoled myself with the thought that this was deepest Lent, a time in Christendom expressly given to torture.

But at that, I was glad of the reminder of things past. The next day, our place looked deserted, our parking lot breathed easier. As did the whole city itself: The best time to explore Metro Manila is truly during Holy Thursday and Good Friday, when the place becomes a throwback to Liberation when cars were to be seen only in movies and the houses of the rich. Or so they tell me, I wasn't born then, even if I look it.

But it wasn't just a sense of the enlargement of physical space that you felt, it was a sense of the enlargement of spiritual space. Shortly before Easter, Metro Manila lapses into a sublime silence and pensiveness. Which is not also without irony, with places like Boracay and Baguio and other parts of the country experiencing in turn crowdedness and traffic and loud music—you are never sure if the last is in tune, you are hard put to find one. It is different in Metro Manila: During those days, it's not just the body that is able to breathe easier, the soul is too. It is the best time to reflect on life and death, or if you are not the type to want to get lost in the vastness of the imponderables, at least on how your life has gone.

What I did think about these past days is why we can't have this not just on Holy Thursday and Good Friday but on a more or less regular basis. I don't mean the streets gloriously bereft of traffic—that isn't going to happen anymore, unless we build more trains and ban cars forever. I don't mean either people wailing a short refrain again and again—we already have that in techno and hip-hop. I mean pausing to reflect on where our personal and national lives have gone, if not the imponderables of life and death. I mean the capacity for reflection itself, and not just the capacity for making a joke out of everything, including life and death. Making a joke out of everything doesn't always guarantee survival, it often guarantees only silliness. Or zombie-ness.

Deepest Lent itself presents the aspect of something token, or ritualistic, a sudden observance of holiness and piety to make up for not living holy and pious lives, or reasonably decent ones, the rest of the year. The flagellants of Pampanga and Tarlac, the people who draw tourists by lashing themselves with thongs, dull glass shards or sharp stones knotted into them, are not entirely exceptional. They are merely the dramatic expression of a national propensity, which is to replace with a burst of ritual sacrifice the far more arduous task of living unrelentingly good, or godly, lives. The self-flagellation for one day becomes a license for murder and mayhem the rest of the year.

Just as well, the pall of quietness that descends on the nation—or some parts of it anyway—has something token about it, a sudden paean to thoughtfulness and compassion to make up for lives of thoughtlessness and indifference to other people's pain the rest of the year. They are not unlike the retreats many public officials go to, which offer far less a challenge to live better lives than a permit to cheat and plunder afterward, having deposited much indulgence in the heavenly bank from which to draw heavily.

I remember many years ago writing a column about why, when people start being a little more ruminative and look back on their lives, particularly asking themselves how they might have gone if they had taken a different turn, they are thought of as experiencing a "middle-age crisis." My question then, as now, is why it should take middle age for anyone to develop that capacity for self-interrogation. Or, indeed, why we should imagine middle age is the only time when people are compelled, or permitted, to do so. Why can't that be all our lives? Why can't we be possessed of a capacity for introspection as much as extrospection and demand at every turn as implacable an accounting of ourselves to ourselves as we do of the life around us? Indeed, why should we imagine that someone who pauses to reflect is in the throes of a crisis?

Ah, but the repeated wailing of refrains doth provoke strange thoughts.

Easter and Lent

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ON EASTER Sunday, the Christian world celebrates the resurrection of Christ. That follows 40 days of Lent, during which we recalled His passion and death. That Christ rose from the dead was the supreme proof of his God-being; on this tenet is anchored the Christian faith. Last Thursday, this column began a series of articles taken from the book, "Backpack of a Jesus-Seeker," by Fr. Carlos H. Abesamis, professor of biblical studies at the Loyola School of Theology. "Backpack" features imaginary conversations—written in easy contemporary style—among three characters, namely, Carl, "Seeker" and "Backpack," who seek to dissect various aspects of faith frequently raised by laymen. In Chapter 6, they use Mel Gibson's monumental film, "The Passion of the Christ," as a contemporary context for discussing the meaning of Jesus' death. They talk about how the film impacts on Filipino Catholicism, and towards the end, they dissected the twin questions of "Why Jesus died" and "Why He was killed?" Here is the continuation:

Backpack: Do we see here any implication for Filipino Catholicism?

Carl: I'll mention one: could a presentation such as Gibson's further encourage the flagellations and crucifixions practiced by local devotees?

Seeker: Another implication: Does the film's violence, particularly if it's adjudged excessive, subtly suggest a violent Deity that exacts so much in order to be appeased?

Carl: I find it one of the great ironies of Christian/Catholic Faith as it has been taught to us: --- the (supposed) love of a violent deity: a God who is Love exacting the last drop of blood.

Seeker: But some would claim that the extreme violence in fact shows to what limits God would go to show His love for us.

* * *

Carl: To raise a related issue: could the film encourage a spirituality characterized by an exaggerated obsession, albeit subconscious, with sin, guilt and fear?

Backpack: But is that not what's needed when people are fast losing a "sense of sin" in a hedonistic world?

Carl: Right. And we should indeed always preserve a healthy sense of sin, but...

Seeker: ...yes, how many of us Catholics rush to confession because "I said bad words; I argued with my wife, and I told a lie"—fearful and guilt-ridden?

Carl: Of course, there are murderers, drug-pushers, corrupt officials, exploiters who should be made to kneel before the shredded back of Gibson's Jesus, but how about...

Seeker: ...us ordinary (mostly God-fearing) folk. What's the effect other than to hammer into our consciousness an exaggerated preoccupation with sin, guilt and fear?

Carl: Again, ironically, such spirituality goes hand in hand with a declaration that God is love and loves us so much...

Why did Jesus Die? Why was He Killed?

Backpack: You spoke of another issue which has a bearing on Filipino Catholicism: the question of the "Why" of Jesus' death.

Seeker: Gibson presents the Passion as a suffering-and-death in atonement for human sin.

Backpack: But Jesus did die to atone for human sin.

Seeker: Indeed, but that's only part of the story. Gibson's way of proceeding is like showing the last 12 hours of Martin Luther King without telling us of his staunch advocacy for civil rights for the black people of America—which is why he was killed.

Backpack: Or like detailing Jose Rizal's last 12 hours without reference to his "subversive activity." Jesus did not just die. He was killed.

Seeker: When dealing with His death, there should be two questions to answer: 1). Why was Jesus killed? 2). Why did He die? These two are separate but complementary questions.

Carl: "Why was Jesus killed" is about the reason for His execution, namely, his passionate and provocative activity for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Backpack: "Why did Jesus die?" is about the faith-meaning attached to His death: that "He died for our sins."

Carl: To deal exclusively with "Why did Jesus die?"is, therefore, one-sided.

Seeker: Actually, this one-sided view of Jesus' death is not unique to Gibson. It's also a common perception in the Church and in our catechism and preaching.

Carl: The film further thrusts that perception deeper into our consciousness.

Backpack: Actually, this one-sided view is an impoverishment of your practice of the Faith when, in fact, the recovery of the "Why was He killed?" aspect can enrich it and the appreciation of Jesus.

How Do You Solve a Problem like Jesus?

Carl: Let's review some of Jesus' actuations in the Book of Life:

- He puts primacy on the human being and human life over and against the accepted tradition and law.
- He was a rebel against tradition. In the eyes of the institution He was not only a non-conformist, He was a heretic, an apostate.
- "Justice-and-compassion" would have been the inscription on His headband if He had worn one.
- He was unabashedly for the poor and stern towards the rich.
- He aims and fires at the establishment and censured the aristocracy.
- He staged a double-assault—in speech and feat—against the most massive institution, the temple.
- He wrested from the experts and the erudite their power and authority.
- He usurped the status of the priest.
- He exposed their hypocrisy and love for externals.
- He accused the religio-political leaders (chief priests, elders, scribes) of being unproductive tenants of the Israelite nation, of murdering the prophets and the son of God.

Carl: With such a record, people like myself would be ready to canonize him. Another martyr in the Roman arena. A subversive saint!

Seeker: Just as we are about to do that, the aristocratic elite of his time condemn him to death.

Carl: How do you solve a problem like Jesus?

Backpack: The authorities had one answer: Kill him. (*Last installment tomorrow*).

Taxes, tax evaders and sin

COMMENTARY

Nono Alfonso, SJ
Institute on Church and Social Issues

TAX evasion is a sin, so asserts Cesar Purisima, GMA's new finance secretary. Speaking before the Chamber of Thrift Banks, he asked priests to preach that not paying taxes is a sin. "How can it not be a sin," he explained, "if it robs Filipinos of opportunities to avail health care services...of enjoying more roads."

Perhaps, Purisima was trying to be relevant during this season of Lent, during which people reflect on their sinful lives. Or, he was simply exhausting all available means of increasing the government's tax collection. Every moral theologian, however, would tell Purisima that sin is not easily defined. This, perhaps, explains why the priest whom Purisima consulted on the subject matter could not say in black and white whether or not tax evasion is a sin.

Traditional catechism says that a sinful act involves three elements: gravity of the act, knowledge and willful consent. However, the Church's understanding of sin has been evolving as Patrick McCormick, C.M., has illustrated in his excellent essay, "Human sinfulness: models for a developing moral theology." He traces the origins of the prevalent understanding of sin from the so-called "Manualist Tradition." Simply put, monks in earlier centuries came up with a list or manual of sins so as to facilitate the work of the priest in the confession box. Although this check list was very convenient for the priest, it had its disadvantages. For one, it made the whole affair very legalistic or juridical. A sinful act had a corresponding judgment and penance. As a result, McCormick says, sin was simply equated to a crime necessitating a punishment, and the sinner was seen as a criminal. It was a neat system, but it failed to consider the other real-life dimensions, such as the social one. More importantly, reducing sin to crime missed the larger perspective that people, in reality, experience sin (and evil) as a complex mystery in their lives. Of this, St. Paul said, "I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want."

In recent years, McCormick continues, two models have emerged among moral theologians. One is the model that looks at sin as a "disease" and the sinner as a sick person. According to this model, "sin is not merely something one does, an act performed or a crime committed." It acknowledges that "sin pervades the human experience...it is an orientation towards disintegration and death." This model, argues McCormick, is faithful to the biblical understanding of sin. In the New Testament, for example Christ offers himself as the physician and refers to his ministry as one of healing.

We are already quite familiar with the other model which stresses on the social dimension of sin and talks about social sin. Purisima himself alluded to this notion when he pointed out that not paying taxes deprives the government of money for basic services. What is affirmed by this notion of sin is that our personal sins find their way in the structures of our society. They, therefore, affect not only our individual lives but our communities as well. In 1991, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippine Church defined social sin as consisting of "situations, collective behavior, or structures that cause and perpetuate social injustices. Such structures are created by the accumulation of many sinful attitudes, two of which are very typical: on the one hand, the all-consuming desire for profit, and on the other, the thirst for power, with the intention of imposing one's will upon others."

McCormick goes on to say that both models provide a deeper understanding of the mystery of sin in our lives than the legalistic Manualist model does. For one, they hew faithfully to the biblical understanding of sin as a state or condition of the human person and as a power that impinges on our lives. It is a state in the sense that it permeates our entire lives, not just at one time or another. With sin as power, who would not bulk large, for instance, in the pervasive influence of corruption in our culture and institutions? With sin as both state and power, there is a recognition that we can not go it alone. We need grace, we need a savior.

For his part, James Keenan, SJ, professor of moral theology at Weston School of Theology, defines sin simply as "the failure to bother to love." In the parable of the Good Samaritan, for instance, Keenan observes that Christ focused not on the crime of the robbers but on the failure of the priest or the Levite to bother to help the victim on the road. He writes: "Each of the bible stories that refers us to sin, refers us to what one could have done and did not do: the man who did not invest the talent, the virgins who were not vigilant, the son who did not go into the field to work as he should." In all these, he says, "our sin is usually not in what we did, not in what we could not avoid, not in what we tried not to do. Our sin is usually where you and I are comfortable, where we do not bother to feel, where, like the Pharisee we have found complacency, a complacency not where we rest in being loved but where we rest in our delusional understanding of how much better we are than others. It is at this point of self-satisfaction that—like the Pharisee, the prodigal's older brother, or the rich man (Lazarus story)—we usually do not bother to love."

Is it then a sin not to pay taxes? If it were, will the gravity or culpability differ between a poor employee with five mouths to feed and a corporation that has been enjoying huge profits through the years? Which one carries more guilt in not bothering to love? On another point, is the country's system of taxation itself fair to everyone, the pending new VAT laws included? Or is it part of a sinful social structure?

A Baguio of new memories

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

A MOVIE is waiting to be made about the transformation of Baguio City from summer retreat of the gentry to a year-round destination. To be sure, the gentry still trek to Baguio, but the old ways—with armies of servants preceding their employers to air out summer homes—are going extinct. Modern living has a bias for the ready-made, and Baguio's hotels increasingly provide for this.

There was a time when I found Baguio depressing, particularly when the wounds inflicted by the big earthquake of 1991 were still so fresh in that city. Since then, however, Baguio has bounced back, and it is once more a pleasant destination. The repairs and improvements made to the North Expressway have gone a long way to making travel to Baguio much safer and much more convenient, although the toll of P203 is a bit shocking. (The cost might be all right for the vacationer, but for those who rely on the expressway for business-related travels, it must be quite a burden. The price of progress? Perhaps. The price we must pay for letting things slide, and for decades of neglect? Certainly.)

Arriving hungry in Baguio at 11p.m., we found Session Road establishments turned out to be mostly closed. A 7-11 "roast beef hotdog" didn't appeal, and we ended up trying our luck at the Camp John Hay Manor. It gave me one more reason to consider it one of my favorite hotels in the Philippines. A very helpful waitress in the deserted dining room immediately ushered us to a table and asked what we'd like to drink. We said we were starving. She frowned for a moment, and said, "I'll go see, we may still have a cook." It turned out one was still left; and without our having to beg, they cheerfully proceeded to inform us that while our choices were limited because of the late hour, they would be glad to feed us.

Now, this is something I honestly never thought I'd encounter in the Philippines: an establishment willing to go out of its way for paying guests. The waitress and her fellow waiters bustled about, orders were quickly placed, and food produced (I made the mistake of ordering *kare-kare*: Billy King, who supervises the hotel restaurant, is a gifted chef but he should drop *kare-kare* from his menu: it's too alien to his tastes and abilities). We ended up refreshed and full; my cousin Tito Avancena, who is the food & beverage generalissimo for the owners of Camp John Hay and Southwoods Golf Club made an unexpected cameo appearance, and I was happy to inform him of the initiative of the Manor staff. He teased me saying they were probably frightened of the press, but he knows better and, I'm sure, he has passed on our words of appreciation to the Manor's general manager.

The next day, Anthony de Leon, manager of the Baguio Country Club, was, as always, his attentive and gentlemanly self. A long delay in the production of *bibingka* for a guest brought forth an on-the-spot training session on customer care, and sincere apologies from De Leon: service is not always perfect, but proper customer care should always be top-notch. The Country Club has responded with a careful attention to detail to the challenge presented by the Manor; competition has honed the services in both places.

I did notice, however, a deterioration in the quality of cuisine in Baguio. This seems to be a function of two things: first, the lowering of budgets for most visitors; and second, simply a lack of keeping-up standards. Café by the Ruins continues to have excellent food, but I was quite dismayed to find that Salud! Bistro, which has wowed many visitors with the excellence (and reasonable prices) of its cuisine, seems to be going through an uninspired period. Chefs are people too, and every day can't always be a good day; but considering I'd had one of the most memorable meals I've had in recent years just last December, it was a let-down. The food was quite good, mind you. But it was far from memorable. However, the disappointment paled in comparison to Mario's, which has simply stopped cooking good food. Last December the food was already disappointing, but this March, it was just bad. Getting a bad stomach from the mango jubilee certainly didn't help.

Baguio's main problem is still pollution; traffic is less, once you figure out alternate routes. I did notice, though, going up Marcos highway, that you can once again, smell the pines. It might just be that tree planting efforts are finally beginning to show results. Over a greatly appreciated complimentary meal, Billy King of the Manor told us of plans to build a cable car system in Baguio. That would involve the closing-off of Session Road to vehicular traffic, which would certainly provide an environment-friendly way for people to get around and help solve both the air pollution and traffic problems.

Going down Kennon Road (for a measly P4-toll, which is ridiculous considering the perpetual maintenance the road requires) reminded me of other comments: how Baguio could really do with two flights a day, or how a train system (capable of loading cars onto trains, from Manila to at least the zigzag) would help boost tourism. Or how SM City (which I rather like, as a mall) has changed the habits of Baguio visitors and affected small shop owners. Interestingly enough, it seems many small shopkeepers have been able to survive on the strength of long-standing customer loyalties; but since Baguio is a predominantly young city, it's only a matter of time before the mall kills those businesses. Baguio is building new memories for many people; and contrary to the pessimism so many feel, I think those memories are turning out to be good ones.

'Martyr' story

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

CONTROVERSY continues to hound the members of the Abu Sayyaf who died in a shootout with police operatives last March 15 at Camp Bagong Diwa jail in Bicutan.

The INQUIRER's manner of reporting on the burial of the fallen Muslim inmates drew criticism from several readers. Their attention was drawn to the front page of the newspaper's March 17 issue that bore the banner "22 Abus buried as 'martyrs.'" Below the headline was the subhead, "They were shrouded in white cloth to signify purity."

Accompanying the news was a photo of the remains of the dead Muslims, with blood stains showing on the white cloth, lying side by side on a shallow grave that was littered with different kinds of debris. A group of male Muslims stood in front of them with hands held up in prayer. The picture occupied two-thirds of the front-page space above the centerfold.

The photo caption read: "MARTYRS, or so they are considered by the Muslims in the Maharlika Village, Bicutan, where the bodies of the Abu Sayyaf prisoners, including commanders Kosovo, Global and Robot, killed at the Bureau of Management and Penology are buried on Wednesday."

A reader, Rolando Evangelista, described the banner as "very irresponsible." He complained that "if you read the headline without reading the details, it is as if you are inviting other Abu Sayyaf members and other Muslims to commit the same act to become martyrs. He asked the newspaper to be careful with its choice of words because of its influence on the readers.

Martyrdom

Another reader, Leo Laca of Binangonan, Rizal, was displeased with what he considered as the "importance" given to the so-called martyrdom of the Abu Sayyaf bandits. He wrote: "Do not magnify the beliefs of those who labeled them as such. Even with the presumption of innocence while undergoing trial, the fact that they tried to escape from detention, killed and injured some BJMP officials are all deplorable acts.

"My favorite newspaper should have given more importance to the bravery and courage of the officers and men who fought it out with those ruthless terrorists. Why not a story on [PO3 Abel Areola] who died in that Bicutan action or those who were injured? I think that deserves more space than those bandits who have continuously brought shame to our country."

For Araceli Lorayes of Muntinlupa City, the subject headline led her "to question the editorial judgment of the headline writer or editorial desk, or both, as it strains credulity. She wrote: "Who baptized them martyrs? Abu Sayyaf relatives and sympathizers who are, to put it charitably, a great, great distance away from being Koranic scholars.

"To make matters worse, the reasoned sensible statements of real Koranic scholars can only be found buried in the jump page, following a lengthy piece on the diatribes of Abu Sayyaf sympathizers, complete with claims that the Abu Sayyaf members died without being able to defend themselves, and there was no mention of the guards killed in the pre-emptive strike.

"Journalists deny that they deliberately sensationalize the news to sell newspapers. They are quick to shoot down any proposal put forth by the military to ban the media from glorifying terrorists, and quick to absolve themselves of responsibility for complaints from Muslims that they are always being portrayed as bloodthirsty terrorists. With today's headline and story, are such journalistic claims credible?"

Intention

When told about the readers' complaints, the editor who closed the front page of the newspaper issue in question said the headline was meant to highlight the irony of the perception of the Muslim community in Maharlika Village about the fallen Abu Sayyaf members.

The participation of the Abu Sayyaf inmates in the kidnapping and killing of scores of innocent civilians is common knowledge, and yet some Muslims continue to hold them up in high esteem.

The editor pointed out that the word "martyr" was enclosed in quotation marks to emphasize that the description did not come from the newspaper, but from some of the Muslims present during the burial.

With regard to the lone fatality on the government side, PO3 Areola, the editor pointed out that the newspaper featured him and the training he underwent under American counter-terrorist experts on the same day that the report about the death of the 22 Abu Sayyaf members came out.

While the editor acknowledged the sensitivity of the headline and photo subject of the complaints, he explained that, in the interest of fair and objective reporting, the newspaper was obliged to print the feelings or reaction of the Muslim community to the death of the Abu Sayyaf members.

Evaluation

I agree with the editor's position that the members of the Muslim community have as much right as the government to have their thoughts on the issue written about.

We may not like the beliefs that the Abu Sayyaf and its sympathizers are fighting (and killing) for, but ignoring or not reporting on their activities will be a big disservice to the readers. The people have the right to know the events happening around us that may affect their lives. Definitely, the Abu Sayyaf's crimes fall squarely within that definition.

But I think the newspaper headline in question went beyond the boundaries of fair and objective reporting. Even if the word "martyr" was put in quotes, the impression that one gathers from reading it is: the newspaper has accorded them that description.

There was nothing in the headline that would indicate that the "anointment" came from some Muslims, not from the INQUIRER. The subhead ("They were shrouded in white cloth to signify purity") came out as a declaration of fact rather than, again, as an opinion of some Muslims. Why that subhead was not put in quotes to show its source is a big question mark.

The usual excuse given for "misleading" headlines is lack of space. I do not buy this line because I believe that form or style should not take precedence over accuracy.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Truth in all sides

IT seems to me that the issues raised by the pro- and anti-mining advocates in the INQUIRER are valid and true, as far as they go. But from the looks of it, the two opposing sides are at each other's throats, and only a hardening of positions will result.

Perhaps, we can take the integral approach proposed by Ken Wilber, the foremost living integral philosopher of our age. Wilber opines that nobody is smart enough to be 100-percent right or 100-percent wrong all the time. Each of us holds a piece or two of the truth at any given time. Trouble arises when one becomes convinced that he holds the entire truth with his one or two pieces, and God helps those who say otherwise.

The trick is to get into the other's slippers, as one forum writer puts it, and try to understand that other's piece of the truth from his unique point of view. Chances are that one will say in the end, "Saints alive, he is really saying the same thing I am saying, only in his own way." For indeed truth is a unity, and one's task is to uncover it in the myriad ways it manifests itself.

Perhaps, the INQUIRER, after sponsoring the forum on mining in the Philippines, should take the extra mile and sponsor an endeavor which would give a chance for all the mining stakeholders—government, Church, NGOs, multinationals, indigenous peoples, communities affected, etc.—to get to examine and know the pieces of authentic truth the other parties are holding. In so doing, perhaps an integral approach to mining may be crafted from the unity of truth that is in the Philippine mining situation.

I am sure there will be no lack of experts from the academe and industry—Asian Social Institute, University of the Philippines, Mining Chamber, etc.—willing to facilitate this endeavor.

—SAMUEL J. YAP,
118 Granada,
San Antonio Heights,
Sto. Tomas, Batangas

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Inspiring article

I COMMEND the INQUIRER for the article titled, "A time for connecting and of healing," written by Tina G. Santos. (PDI, 1/23/05)

The article gave people a sense of unity, of empathy and, somehow, of hope and optimism despite life's tragedies. It showed us, readers, how to react positively to negative things in our lives.

I hope you will continue telling stories about people and events that illustrate good values and stir up positive emotions in spite of the painful and sometimes awful world we live in.

—JONATHAN DAVID SANTOS CHU,
Philippine Science
High School Main Campus,
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

Who is fooling whom?

THE APPROVAL by the Senate of the House version of the 2005 national budget without any amendment was a master stroke in psychological warfare. It bluntly pulled the rug out from under the congressmen's feet. The congressmen had hoped to restore the 40-percent reduction on their Priority Development Assistance Fund (made in their version of the budget bill), banking on the usual quid pro quo deals that characterize bicameral conference meetings. But they found themselves ensnared in their own trick when the senators refused to bite.

By approving in toto the House version of the 2005 national budget, thus doing away with the cumbersome bicameral conference committee meetings, a number of senators believed they prevented congressmen from making insertions (particularly pork barrel) in the final budget bill.

Smarting from their own undoing, the congressmen crossed party lines in a move to revive the plan to abolish the Senate by amending the Constitution. Led by Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salappudin of Basilan, the embattled congressmen issued a joint statement slamming the Senate for blindly approving the 2005 national budget.

For his part, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile wondered why the congressmen were so angry at the Senate approval of the budget that was approved by the House.

Jumping into the comical fray, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago challenged the legislators to commit wholesale hara-kiri in the name of national interest. At a given signal, the loquacious senator said, the legislators could all stab themselves in the abdomen to end it all.

The least people can expect from our lawmakers is not to act in a childish manner. But with this exchange of barbs between the senators and congressmen, may we ask the question: Who is fooling whom?

—ARMANDO F. ORDOÑEZ,
San Vicente, Pili,
Camarines Sur

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Alarming gov't inaction

IT alarms me that, up to now, the proposal to enact a two-child policy is not gaining enough serious consideration on the part of our policymakers. The Philippine population is something that our leaders must at this point seriously address. At the end of the year, our population is expected to surge to 85.2 million at a 2.36-percent annual growth rate, which is the highest in Asia.

"Poverty Assessment in the Philippines," a study of the Asian Development Bank, which was released last January, showed that while there had been a sustained GDP growth from 2000-2003, it had not been enough to keep up with the high population growth—keeping the GNP stagnant at around $1,000 for 20 years. Neither has the sustained GDP growth improved the situation of the poor whose real average family income has recorded a 10-percent drop.

Furthermore, access to essential services, such as health and education, remains a problem—for every 100 children nationwide who start Grade 1, only 67 percent finish elementary school; in the poorest regions, the rate is even much lower—a mere 34 percent. Even worse is public health care: its quality already poor, it is not readily accessible to ordinary Filipinos. Empirical records show that the incidence of poverty among bigger families is higher than in smaller ones—only 19 percent of families with three members were poor in 2000, as against the 55 percent of families with eight members.

The study said it is a vicious cycle: poverty perpetuates high population growth rates (with poorer women having higher fertility rates), and high population growth rates perpetuate poverty. But while these problems are staring us right in the face, our leaders stubbornly refuse to free our society from the shackles of the ultra-conservative, unduly impractical chains of Roman Catholicism, for fear of losing a strong ally. Indeed, high population leads to higher demands on government—more educational facilities, more hospitals, food, water, and the list goes on.

To say that the real problem is the government's inability to deliver basic goods only begs the question. What really matters is for the government to undertake measures, no matter how unpopular, so it can lay the ground for a brighter future for all.

The poor state of our country appeals to morality as much as the issues of population and contraception do. How can the government be seen to have moral integrity if it allows people to wallow in poverty while it basks in the lavish praises of the Church? This only gives the impression that the government is not really seriously concerned with the alarming population growth. A bold move, such as adopting a two-child policy, will be a good start in changing this public perception of the government.

—MARY ANNE RAÑESES,
aneraneses@yahoo.com

Population bill dangerous

HB 3773 violates the dignity of the human person. It tells us that making love is okay provided pregnancy is avoided. It empowers adolescents from age 10 about sexual rights. It advocates safe sex, and provides for all methods and techniques of modern contraception. It gives the young the right to sterilization, ligation without parents' consent. It makes sex education mandatory from Grade 5 to high school. It penalizes individuals and institutions who refuse to perform reproductive health medical services with imprisonment, a fine, plus civil damages. It provides for the use and application of modern contraceptive devices for the prevention of unwanted, unplanned, mistimed pregnancy. The bill will open the floodgates for sexual promiscuity.

Western countries and Singapore, after legalizing contraceptive use and managing their population growth, are experiencing a drop in fertility rates. The trend in the decrease in population in those countries is irreversible, and there are deep social and economic effects. Singapore is now encouraging "three children or more if you can" with difficulty because the "contraceptive mentality" is deeply ingrained. They are now welcoming immigration, especially of talented people, to power economic progress.

We hope the P1.4-billion funding from the UN Funding for Population Affairs that is pushing "Ligtas Buntis" and HB 3773 will not succeed in Congress. We know that contraceptive manufacturers earn billions of dollars yearly in the United States alone.

We pray that our government will help our poor with honest and good governance, instead of passing HB 3773.

—LELLA M. DE JESUS,
Mary Mother of
Good Counsel Parish,
Marcelo Green, Parañaque City

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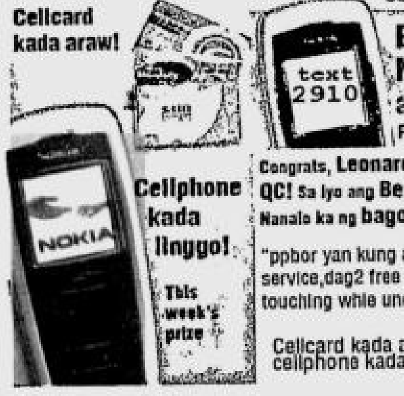
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COPS IN PAYOLA NAMED

Gambling financier fears for life, flees

MATI, Davao Oriental—The confessed financier of illegal numbers game here, who accused top police oficials of being in her payola, said she was leaving the country because the police were out to harm her.

Edna Pullan flew to Singapore yesterday because she said she fears for her life.

"I know the police are out to harm me for my exposé against them," she told reporters before leaving.

Earlier, Pullan said provincial police director, Senior Supt. Bienvenido Latag and Mati police chief Chief Insp. Jose Catimbang, were making money out of the operation of illegal numbers game here.

She said the two officials were asking P1,000 per week from gambling operators.

Both Catimbang and Latag denied the allegation, saying Pullan only wanted to destroy the police's anti-gambling campaign.

But Pullan said she was not making up stories. She said she decided to come out in the open because the two officials have jacked up their demand from P1,000 to P5,000.

"I want the people to know that if something bad happens to me, only the police have the motives to do it," Pullan said.

Pullan said her absence here would only be temporary.

"I am willing to execute an affidavit against these police officials who have made us, local gambling operators, their milking cows. They are shameless," she said.

"She is making all these lies against us in the media. But I assure Mrs. Pullan that the police are not out to harm her. We are just doing our job, I hope she understands us," Catimbang said.

"The so-called intensified crackdown against illegal gambling operators is selective applied. The police are playing favorites. They will not arrest those who pay the new payola to them," Pullan said.

Town councilors said they wanted to conduct an investigation on the exposé made by Pullan.

"That must be investigated. We will conduct a full-blown investigation whether it is true that police officials in the province are getting payola from local gambling lords," Councilor Joel Valles said.

Valles said the town council would invite Latag and Catimbang when the investigation starts Wednesday.

"This investigation is in aid of legislation," he said.

Meanwhile, a broadcaster said he was meted a one week suspension by the management of the radio station he is working for for promoting Last Two digits in his radio program.

"I would like to inform my avid listeners that I am being suspended for a week by the provincial chair of KBP for promoting Last Two in my radio program. And I accepted the order," Frank Gupit said in his radio program over Radyo Natin here.

Last Two digits is a popular game in the Visayas and Mindanao.

It is based on the last digits of the last two balls drawn in the daily lotto. *Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mayor offers his town as war games site

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The municipal mayor of Sibuco, Zamboanga del Norte is offering his town as the next host of the RP-US Balikatan military exercises.

Mayor Norbi Edding, who was here at the opening of a travel agency where he is a business partner, said the move is necessary to correct the bad impression that Muslims hate Americans.

Sibuco is the site of the "infamous" June 7, 2002 rescue of Abu Sayyaf hostage Gracia Burnham, which led to the death of her husband Martin and Filipino nurse Deborah Yap.

It was also off the Sibuco coast where the military clashed with an Abu Sayyaf group, which resulted in the killing of Abu Sayyaf spokesman Abu Sabaya later that same month.

"Sibuco is 80 percent Muslim but they don't hate Americans," Edding said.

Edding said that he offered to host the 2006 Balikatan exercise to prove that Muslims are pro-peace. "We in Sibuco are pro-military exercises," he said.

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Gov's aide tagged in murder linked to quarrying

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LUBAO, Pampanga—A suspected illegal quarry operator, who police identified as a security aide of Gov. Mark Lapid, was arrested here for the murder of a barangay captain in nearby Floridablanca town.

Lubao policemen arrested Zaldy Ramos, 34, in his house in Barangay Sta. Barbara on Thursday.

Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, Pampanga police director, said the three guns seized from Ramos during the arrest have invalid licenses.

Dying man's word

Cabancalan village chief Andy Manacmul, who was ambushed on March 12, had identified Ramos as his attacker before he died on March 18, said Manacmul's brother, former Floridablanca Councilor Armando Manacmul.

Several days before he was attacked, Andy Manacmul, according to his fellow local officials, had talked with Ramos to demand the village's 40-percent share of revenues from his quarry operations.

Direct query

Local officials said the delayed remittances of sand revenues from the provincial capitol had prompted Manacmul to go straight to the quarry operators, both legal and illegal, to ask for his village's quarry revenue share.

At past 9 p.m. on March 12, a lone gunman shot Manacmul as he parked his car in the family's garage. He suffered from blood loss due to a bullet wound in the cheek.

As the ambush was carried out, sources said at least two village officials, who were with Manacmul that night, were hogtied by still unidentified men.

Lapid did not deny that Ramos was one of his political leaders in Lubao in the last elections. However, the governor said Ramos should take responsibility for whatever wrongdoing he did.

"I will not tolerate his bad deed, if he indeed did it," Lapid said.

He said he did not issue Ramos a permit to operate a quarry site.

Investigation

The House of Representatives is investigating charges that income from quarrying dropped sharply during the term of then governor Lito Lapid, the current governor's father, and also during the term of Gov. Mark Lapid.

Charges were raised that the quarry income went to the pockets of top officials of Pampanga and critics of the Lapids had said the income loss, should it be found to be caused by graft, was of "plunder proportions."

The elder Lapid, now a senator, denied any corruption in the collection of income from sand quarrying, which is levied P300 per truck.

The elder Lapid said since the income was not realized, then there could be no graft committed because there was no money generated in the first place. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Zabarte Town Center Tel# 962-4185 to 86
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Tutuban Center Mall 1 Tel# 525-8165
QUEZON CITY
Ali Mall Tel# 912-6601
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Anti-logging measure hits charcoal trade

NATIVIDAD, Pangasinan—Local officials have enforced a modified log ban in the town and ordered charcoal producers to stay off the town's forests to protect its dense cover and wildlife.

Mayor Alejandrea Supnet said the ban restricts charcoal producers to cut trees in the forest but would allow them to log in their properties.

Supnet said this would conserve rare tree species and wildlife threatened by unrestricted logging in years.

The modified ban was enforced in February after the town council lifted the moratorium on charcoal-making following the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' reiteration of the total log ban order in December.

Supnet said the town's forest resources, which provided wood for charcoal production to about 80 percent of its residents since the 1970s, should be guarded to save the town from future disasters, resource shortage, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Natividad is at the foot of Mt. Caraballo and has more than 12,000 hectares of forested area. The local government has set up checkpoints in the town's entry and exit points to monitor transport of endangered teak trees, wild boar (*alingo*) and deer that roam the mountains.

Families affected by the ban have been tapped in a massive production of forest tree seedlings "to help them realize our advocacy," the mayor said.

Supnet said varieties grown in the town's nurseries are mahogany, narra, gmelina and teak.

The local government has also created its version of the Task Force Bantay Kalikasan to watch over the town's resources.

The environmental watchdog is composed of local officials and representatives from the villages of San Macario Norte, San Macario Sur, Cacandungan, Batchelor East, Salud, San Eugenio, San Miguel and Calapugan.

Michael Sevilla, task force chair, said the families affected by the charcoal production ban were initially disgruntled by the move.

"But through [the continuous] information campaign since January, residents are now educated about the importance of forest management," Sevilla said. *Nemesio de la Cruz, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Solon to raise funds for cager

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella is spearheading a campaign to raise legal funds for former basketball star Rudy Distrito who is facing murder charges in Las Vegas.

The congressman said Distrito, a native of Bacolod, needs at least $70,000, or P3.8 million, to pay his lawyers, Robert Langford and Susan Burke.

Aside from this, Distrito also has to raise $500,000, or P27 million, in bail bond for his temporary liberty.

Distrito, 47, is facing murder charges for stabbing to death Mexican-American Juan Amaya following a heated argument at 4805 Deckow Lane Apartments, near the Koval Tropacina in Las Vegas last Nov. 24, 2004.

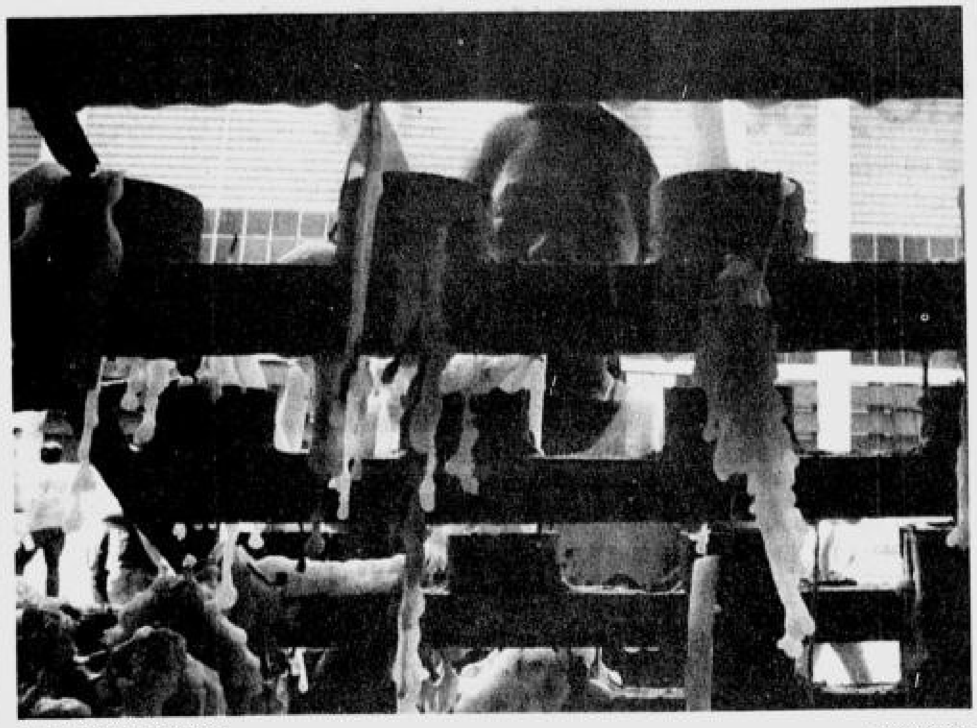
He pleaded not guilty during his arraignment before a state court in Las Vegas. Distrito's trial starts Nov. 14.

Distrito earlier told Puentevella that he merely acted in self-defense.

The congressman on Monday visited Distrito who was detained at the Clark County Detention Center in Las Vegas. Puentevella was in Las Vegas to watch last Sunday's fight of Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao and Mexican Erik Morales.

Puentevella said he will start the campaign for the former cager's legal fund as soon as he returns home from Las Vegas.

He said he planned to coordinate with Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, former Sen. Robert Jaworski and Noli Eala, Philippine Basketball Association commissioner.



FEWER VISITORS JOAN BONDOC
Unlike the past years when thousands of devotees flock to the Our Lady of Lourdes grotto in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, during the Holy Week, this Holy Week saw only few devotees going to the place to pray for miracles and seek blessings.

Quarry firm defies DENR order to stop operating

FLORIDABLANCA, Pampanga—A quarry company has continued operations in Barangay Apalit here despite a cease-and-desist order from the Environmental Management Bureau on March 18 over air and water pollution.

The crushing and screening facilities of the Tai-Phil Sand Quarry Inc., formerly the Omnico Consortium Inc., have not stopped even during the Holy Week, according to Antonio Buyson, president of the Floridablanca, Pampanga Quarry Association.

The company, Buyson said, still dumps *buga* (aggregate coarse materials or pumice stones and mud separated from washed fine sand) and wastewater at the Gumain River.

The EMB, he said, needed to enforce the order that came 18 months after he filed the complaint in August 2003 and two months after he brought the case to Environment Secretary Michael Defensor in January.

Lormelyn Claudio, EMB regional director, also suspended the environmental compliance certificate of Tai-Phil pending full compliance with the requirements of pollution control laws that it "blatantly disregarded."

Claudio said the company, which was issued an ECC in 1998, failed to build an adequate wastewater treatment facility and air pollution control device despite a commitment it made in November 2003.

It also disposed its wastes into the river. Claudio said the company's wastewater samples failed the effluent standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Buyson said Tai-Phil's *buga* and untreated wastewater not only affected the health of residents. He said the sand downstream had also been polluted because these were dumped at the river and were washed down to the quarry sites of his group's members.

Claudio ordered a stop to the illegal disposal and required the transfer of the *buga* to a suitable area. The EMB also fined the company at least P200,000 for the violations.

Lawyer Santiago Beltran Jr., counsel of Tai-Phil, said the EMB has given his client a grace period of a month.

Beltran confirmed the company was operating but "with strict measures not to repeat its violations."

"We are ready to transfer the *buga* but we are waiting for the clearance (of the provincial government) to transport the wastes and be exempted from the P300 sand fee for hauling," he said yesterday.

Beltran said Buyson filed the pollution case to pressure the company to recognize his right-of-way claim to a quarry site. Tai-Phil, he said, bought the same site from Buyson's brother-in-law. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Cyber war emerging from competition for tourism between Baguio, Tagaytay

BAGUIO CITY—It has become a cyber war between the Philippines' two premier summer destinations as the Baguio City council started investigating who the true owner of the website www.tagaytay.com is for reportedly defaming Baguio's reputation.

The Baguio council on Monday announced the investigation after the website, which is promoting Tagaytay City in Cavite as a tourism destination, identified Baguio as the most polluted city in the country and described it as overpopulated.

Though www.tagaytay.com has already changed the contents of its tirades against Baguio, Councilor Rocky Thomas Balisong said the council would look into the Tagaytay City government's hand in the mess.

Domain rules state that cities and government institutions (like www.baguio.gov.ph and www.pia.gov.ph) should be owned by the cities and institutions themselves and not by private individuals and groups.

Tagaytay's own information technology developer, Management Information System, said it has nothing to do with the website.

The www.tagaytay.com described itself as "a privately owned website operated in the spirit of promoting Tagaytay and the Philippines. It is not affiliated with any government agency nor the City of Tagaytay."

When the Baguio City council started its complaint early this month, the advisory in www.tagaytay.com said: "Baguio City is nestled 5,000 feet above sea level atop the Grand Cordillera Mountain Range. Baguio City, the highest city in the Philippines, is located in the heart of Benguet province, about a six-hour bus trip (one way) from Manila. It's the summer capital of the Philippines. But NOT for long as Tagaytay is coming on strong without all the pitfalls of Baguio's success, i.e. pollution, overpopulation, and high prices, etc."

"Baguio's success has caused it to become the most polluted city in the Philippines, even worse than Manila. The six-hour bus trip can be tiresome as well, though buses are air-conditioned and they show three movies during the trip. However, there is air service to Baguio, but for whatever reason, the tickets seem expensive," it said.

Balisong said the tirade was uncalled for and "showed the crab mentality of our fellow Filipinos."

The Baguio council has also asked the website developer to issue a formal apology to Baguio City through a major national daily. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Mayor opposes Southcom transfer

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Mayor Celso Lobregat has questioned the wisdom of President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to transfer the Southern Command headquarters and the Police Regional Command from this city to Pagadian City.

This, as he appealed to the Zamboangueños to voice out their sentiments and speak as one in opposing the transfer.

Lobregat said the President could have been ill-advised on her decision to transfer the Southcom and PNP headquarters to Pagadian City.

The city mayor said he, along with Rep. Erico Basilio Fabian and Southern Command officials, were caught by surprise when the President revealed her plan for the transfer during a meeting with civilian and military officials during the President's visit to this city on March 17.

Lobregat said the decision, if pushed through, will bring economic difficulties to the city, saying the mere pronouncement of the transfer would already discourage prospective businessmen from investing in the city.

The President, however, said the relocation of Southcom would provide more economic opportunities to Zamboanga City. *Rolly A. San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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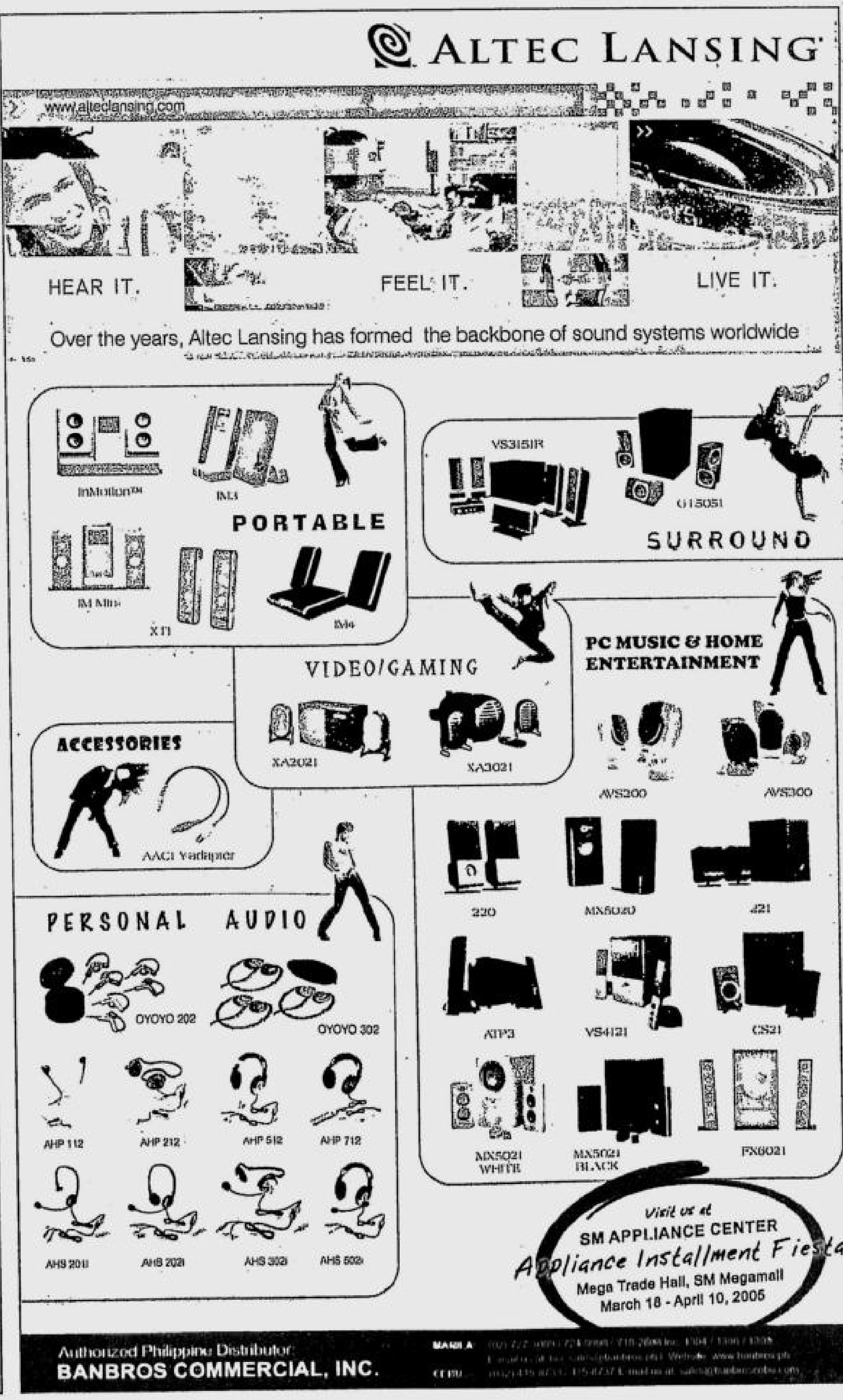

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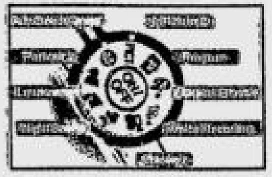

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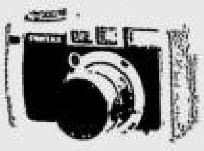

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POPE John Paul II strains as he tries to deliver his Urbi et Orbi blessing to pilgrims in St. Peter's Square from his apartment window, but he failed to voice out his traditional Easter Sunday blessing. AFP

Ailing Pope blesses flock but is unable to speak

From page A1

body is so sad, and so many have tears in their eyes," said Hubert Wichert, from the town of Essen.

A physician from Nice, France, Milou Drici, said that "as a doctor, I felt for him. It is an ordeal for him and you could see his frustration. You have to admire his strength and fortitude. The faith of the people, as you saw today, helps him overcome his difficulties."

For the first time since John Paul's papacy began in 1978, Easter Sunday Mass at the Vatican was celebrated without the Pope as he continued his convalescence following two recent hospitalizations for breathing crises. For years, John Paul also has suffered from Parkinson's disease.

John Paul missed participating in all major Holy Week events, a strong indication of his weakened condition.

On Feb. 24, surgeons inserted a tube in John Paul's throat to help him breathe, and since then, the Pontiff has uttered only a few words in public.

Easter message

In his Easter message read by Sodano, John Paul said people were hungering for "truth, freedom, justice and peace."

John Paul also asked God to "give also to us the strength to show generous solidarity toward the multitudes who are even today suffering and dying from poverty and hunger, decimated by fatal epidemics or devastated by immense natural disasters."

A prayer was said during the Mass asking for "life and new energies" for the ailing Pontiff and the entire Catholic Church.

TV hookups broadcast the service to 74 countries.

Sunday morning began chilly, with a light drizzle. Later the sun timidly broke through the clouds.

"It would have been better with the Pope," said Sheri Zimpelman, who was in the crowd at the Sunday service with her husband, a US serviceman stationed in Aviano, northern Italy.

Her husband, Thomas Zimpelman, said: "If he's sick, he should do what's best for him. His presence is enough."

John Paul also skipped the Easter vigil Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday night to rest for Sunday's blessing. German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a close papal aide, celebrated the service, and read a papal message in which John Paul assured the crowd that he was watching the Mass on television in his Vatican apartment.

On Friday night, John Paul appeared via a video hookup to the faithful at the Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum. John Paul was seen, always with the camera at his back, as he sat in his private chapel and watched the procession on television.

The Pontiff traditionally has used the Easter Sunday message to reflect on war, poverty and terrorism. He also developed a tradition of delivering holiday greetings in dozens of languages.

"It pains him to be on the sidelines," the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano wrote Saturday. *AP*

Teaching kids . . .

From page A1

phemisms and tell it like it is.

"We have to be frank so as to be understood and not be misinterpreted," Negros Oriental population officer Jeanette Villarubia told journalists at a forum on reproductive health last week. "Don't be ashamed to use words like *bilat* (vagina) and *otin* (penis) because these words are not *bastos* (obscene)."

The Provincial Population Office, in coordination with the Integrated Provincial Health Office (IPHO) and several nongovernment organizations, has been conducting forums on adolescent reproductive health in Negros Oriental since last year.

Initially, the high school students from the cities of Bayawan and Tanjay and the towns of San Jose, Sibulan, Valencia, Ayungon and La Libertad were embarrassed, Villarubia said.

"But they have since come to realize that what we are talking about is part of each one's anatomy, and that this discussion is good for them," she said.

Culture

However, not all journalists at the forum were sold on such a direct approach.

Invoking culture, Bing Aguilar, news director of radio dyGB, said journalists could not bluntly use local sexual terms in their broadcasts.

Jimmy Abayon, news editor of Sun Star Dumaguete, agreed: "Talking about sex to children is really difficult for parents. It's foreign to our culture. If we impose it on ourselves, we will destroy our culture."

Villarubia conceded that talking about sex to children appeared easier for Western parents. But she pointed out that Filipino children had become quite westernized.

"We mock foreign cultures that encourage children to bring contraceptives when going out on dates. But that's probably applicable here now. Whether we like it or not, our children do it. And when they have a family at a very early age, they kiss their future goodbye," she said.

The survey says...

Villarubia cited a survey on the sexual behavior of adolescents in three Philippine cities showing that 26 percent of the males and 10 percent of the females had engaged in premarital sex.

She said the survey also showed that:

- Of the females who had engaged in premarital sex, 17 percent said they had sex on their first date, and 10 percent said sex was forced on them.
- Of the 2,277 cases of child abuse recorded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development nationwide, 25 percent belonged to the 16-18 age group.
- Sixty percent of new HIV infections occurred in the 15-24 age group, the same group that registered 74 percent of the total number of illegitimate births.
- Only 4 percent were knowledgeable about contraception.

Openness

Dr. Bernarda Cortes, IPHO communicable diseases specialist, also advised parents to be more open in discussing sex with their children.

"It may not be part of our culture, but so are the pornographic magazines and suggestive TV shows to which the children are exposed every day. We have to open up because if we keep quiet, more kids will be put in harm's way," she said.

Fr. Fred Duran, a married Catholic priest who is now Tanjay information officer, said he used to be very conservative about sex and related issues.

"It was through seminars like this that my mind was opened," he said, adding that he was married by the time he attended the seminars.

Duran is a staunch advocate of reproductive health education.

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Press freedom watchdog to probe journalists' slay

From page A1

down in front of her 10-year-old son (not daughter as police earlier reported) inside her house as she was eating dinner.

Task Force Esperat

The lone gunman casually walked out of the house and joined three companions who had served as lookouts.

Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao yesterday created Task Force Esperat to investigate the murder.

Based on a police report, the gunman and the lookouts were already in the area of Esperat's home as early as noon of Thursday.

The gunman had even reportedly played with some children in the area, including the victim's 10-year-old son James.

Investigators said witnesses saw the gunman only that day but his companions had been in the area thrice—March 13, 19 and 24—before the murder took place.

Shortly before Esperat was killed, the gunman reportedly bought cigarettes from Che-che, the victim's 23-year-old daughter, who was then tending the family-owned *sari-sari* store.

Good evening, ma'am

After buying cigarettes, the gunman entered the victim's house, greeted her "*Maayong gab-i da ma'am*" (Good evening, ma'am) and then shot her point-blank. Esperat died from a single bullet in the head.

The police have distributed sketches of the gunman and of one of the lookouts.

Lomibao designated Senior Supt. Rolando Dalangin, chief of operations of the Central Mindanao police command, as task force head.

The task force is under the supervision of Chief Supt. Antonio Billones, Central Mindanao police director. The PNP chief, however, directed the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) to take the lead in the investigation.

Possible masterminds

Lomibao, who flew in from Manila, said the killing was work-related. "No doubt about that," he told reporters.

He said that "whoever is involved in the killing" would answer for Esperat's death. "I promise you, we will not leave any stone unturned," Lomibao assured the victim's family.

George Esperat, husband of the slain columnist, mentioned two local politicians in Tacurong and a police official based in General Santos City as the possible masterminds. "They were my wife's leading enemies," George said in the vernacular.

Esperat had filed administrative charges against the two local politicians and the police official.

Prove sincerity

In Manila, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) asked the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo to prove its sincerity in its anticorruption campaign by pursuing justice for all journalists slain due to their crusade against corruption.

"Media are crucial to the success of the anticorruption campaign," NUJP secretary general Carlos Conde said in a statement.

The NUJP noted that a number of the more than 60 journalists slain since 1986 had reported strongly against corruption.

In Mati, Davao Oriental, two radiomen critical of Gov. Maria Elena Palma Gil, including the provincial chair of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas, said they had been receiving threats.

"The series of killings of mediamen has indeed a chilling effect on us. Almost daily, I get death threats on my phone telling me that my days are numbered because of my relentless exposé on anomalies in the provincial government," Francisco Gupit, a commentator for Radyo Natin, said.

Gupit is facing a P50-million libel suit filed by Gov. Palma Gil and her daughter Ma. Consuelo, a provincial board member.

Gil told the INQUIRER she had no plans to harm her critics. "I am not a violent person. The battle is already in court so we should fight there," she said. *Reports from Aquiles Z. Zonio and Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and AFP*

Life Rx

from Dr. Ricardo Fernandez

CoQ$_{10}$: Antioxidant for the Heart

Heart failure is the leading cause for hospitalization in people over the age of 65 and the risk of developing it increases with age. Heart Disease is one of the top 5 "killer diseases" in the Philippines. In the United States, 20% of Heart Attack victims will die within 1 year of diagnosis, and 50% will die within 5 years. With these statistics, it is wise to look at all available treatments to help prevent it from happening.

What is CoQ$_{10}$?

Coenzyme Q$_{10}$ or CoQ$_{10}$ is a natural substance in the body that helps the cells produce energy and serves as an antioxidant to protect cells from free radicals. Even though it is naturally occurring in the body, the amount of CoQ$_{10}$ in the body declines with age and inadequate diets.

How can CoQ$_{10}$ help the heart?

Congestive heart failure or CHF happens when the heart is unable to pump blood throughout the body. CHF is not a disease in itself but a physiological result of some underlying condition. It is wise therefore to find out the underlying cause courtesy of your doctor and find out the appropriate medication.

CoQ$_{10}$ can be used as an additional therapy to help prevent and treat CHF. CoQ$_{10}$ has the ability to help increase the pumping force of the heart through enhanced cellular energy production. Simply put, it helps the heart pump blood more efficiently.

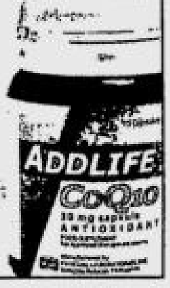
Benefits of CoQ$_{10}$ to the heart based on clinical trials conducted in the United States, Great Britain and Denmark:

- *Heart function improved by 20%*
- *Heart's capacity to pump blood efficiently improved nearly 35%*
- *Systolic blood pressure decreased by 4.4%*
- *End-diastolic volume decreased by 8.4%*
- *Cardiac workload improved by 14.3%*

Sources: www.webmd.com & www.lef.org

This is for educational purposes only and is not meant to replace your doctor's advice. Ask your doctor for more information or you can call the AddLife Hotline at 920-1911

Dr. Ricardo O. Fernandez finished his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Sto. Tomas. He is a consultant at the Makati Medical Center and Associate Board Examiner of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology.



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VAT hike needed—UP 11

From page A1

and debt by adopting revenue and cost-saving measures.

Because four of the eight revenue measures originally proposed by the Arroyo administration have been abandoned, the economists said the VAT amendment was the only significant revenue measure still pending.

Two measures have been passed by Congress. These are the excise tax on alcohol and tobacco products (also known as "sin" taxes), albeit in diluted form, and the lateral attrition law, which the UP 11 said had dubious revenue impact.

The four tax measures abandoned by the administration were the tax on telecommunications, the excise tax on petroleum products, adoption of a gross income tax and a general tax amnesty.

The administration could expect P41.7 billion in revenues from the three measures under its own assumptions (P30 billion from VAT, P5 billion in fiscal incentives and P6.7 billion from sin taxes), down from P97 billion to P122 billion that it had projected in the latter part of 2004, according to Emmanuel de Dios, Benjamin Diokno, Emmanuel Esguerra, Raul Fabella, Ma. Socorro Gochoco-Bautista, Felipe Medalla, Solita Collas-Monsod, Renato Reside, Edita Tan, Gerardo Sicat and Ernesto Pernia.

Debt default

The group said the P41.7 billion was barely sufficient to meet the P54 billion needed this year to avoid a debt default in the future and another P54 billion to restore vital social services to even halfway decent levels.

The economists said they "continue to hold that as a bare minimum, an increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent is an inevitable and basic component of any adequate formula to address the fiscal crisis."

The House of Representatives version has exempted a number of manufactured products such as instant noodles and sardines that the poor consume. It also calls for multi-tiered VAT rates. The Senate version keeps the rate at 10 percent, but widens its coverage.

The UP 11 said the proposal to raise the VAT rate to 12 percent had been mangled because it was perceived that the higher tax would be shouldered mainly by the poor and the middle class.

Mildly progressive

Using household expenditures as a tax base, the VAT is mildly progressive, according to the economists. A tax is said to be "progressive" when the amount paid by the rich as a proportion of their income or spending is higher than that paid by the poor.

Data from the Family Income Expenditure Survey in 2000 showed that almost 40 percent of the VAT was paid by the richest 10 percent, while only 17.1 percent came from the poorest half, according to the economists.

They said that "it is not the main purpose of a consumption tax to be progressive but rather, in being uniform, to raise revenue in the simple and less distortive manner for the economy."

By contrast, the economists said the current proposals appeared to have lost sight of the original purpose of a VAT. Instead, the proposals seek to address everyone's pet issue in a single measure as if the government had no other tools at its disposal to address the various social problems being raised, the economists said.

They said that aside from raising sizable revenues, the VAT measure was also expected to serve as an antipoverty program and a safety net.

"On this argument, proposals have been made to exempt instant noodles and canned sardines from the VAT or, in the Senate version, to increase their presumptive VAT input credits on such things as sardines, mackerel, cooking oil and refined sugar," the economists said.

Folly and tokenism

They said the folly and tokenism behind such proposals became apparent once one considered the following:

"First, not all who are poor consume only instant noodles and canned sardines. What about those, for instance, who eat wheat not in noodles but in cheap baked products?

"Second, not all instant noodles and canned sardines are consumed only by the poor (the 'leaky bucket' problem). Should premium Japanese instant noodles and premium canned sardines (imported and local ones) also be VAT-exempt? Who is to say which is which?

"Third, another leaky bucket problem, not all who consume instant noodles and canned sardines are poor. Does a rich person addicted to instant noodles, whether cheap or expensive, deserve an exemption?

"Finally, a lower VAT rate or a higher VAT exemption on specific goods is hardly the only way to help the poor, and likely not the best, either," the UP 11 said.

International air carriers

The UP 11 also took issue with the House proposal to grant a zero VAT rate on sales to persons engaged in international shipping or international air transport and to remove the 3-percent tax on quarterly receipts of international air and shipping carriers doing business in the country.

The proposal goes too far because it maintains the VAT-free status of these operators and rescinds an already existing gross-receipts tax, according to the economists. More significantly, it zero-rates their inputs, the UP 11 said.

While the principle of broadening the base of the VAT by removing exemptions cannot be denied, a good deal of apprehension has attended the proposal to subject two major items to the VAT system—petroleum products and electricity, the economists said.

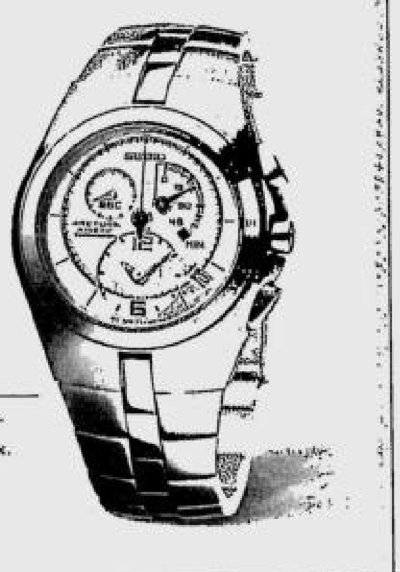
"There is good reason to be circumspect regarding these products and services, first, since these are almost universally used commodities; hence, large increases in their prices could have potentially far-reaching effects on the economy. Second, however, these commodities are already the subject of specific taxes and other impositions, which themselves need to be re-examined.

In the immediate term, there may be good reason to hold off on the inclusion of these sectors, they said.

Keep it simple

The UP 11 urged legislators to keep things simple. "The VAT is bound to bite into consumers' pockets—if it did not do so, it would not be a consumption tax. But it does so for a larger purpose—to stave off a crisis and contribute funds for social development and infrastructure," the group said.

"Helping the poor, helping small businesses, even helping big airlines may be priorities that Congress deems important. Income and wealth taxes, implemented effectively, can redistribute income; well-targeted social subsidies and programs can alleviate poverty. And government has certainly found other effective ways to help people like Lucio Tan both in the past and more recently. For now, therefore, they should do well to leave the spirit and structure of VAT alone," the UP 11 said.



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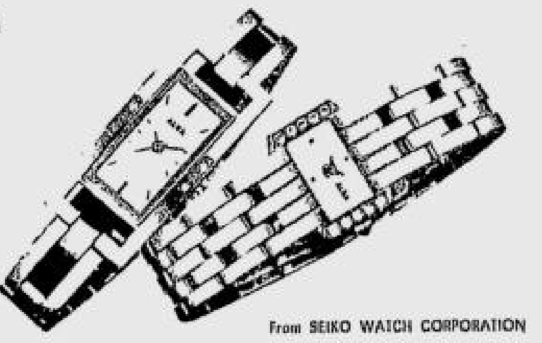

From SEIKO WATCH CORPORATION

Batanes eyed as world heritage site

From page A1

amount of prestige and could help raise awareness about its preservation. Authorities may also receive financial assistance or expert advice from Unesco about ways to maintain the site.

For locals like Florentina Estrella, 79, who is more used to a quiet village existence, this latest development has opened her tiny world to many visitors. Dozens of Filipinos and foreigners now call on Estrella each year.

Her tiny, low-lying house made from lime and sea stones with its highly polished floors, has withstood the battering of typhoons and a tsunami that wiped out nearly the entire coastal hamlet more than 50 years ago.

Her house, locally called a "sinandumparan," is the oldest stone structure in Batanes. It is included on the Unesco list that is expected for grading by June or July, nine years after the local Batanes Heritage Foundation invited a team to visit the islands.

THE OLDEST stone structure in all of Batanes is the house of Florentina Estrella, one of the several unique dwellings in the islands. It is also one of the reasons for the nomination of Batanes as a world heritage site of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco). AFP

Mixed feelings

But Batanes' growing reputation as a new frontier tourist destination has been greeted with mixed feelings by the local government which, while partly relying on revenues from visitors, is under pressure to limit the number of tourists who might overwhelm preservation sites, officials say.

As word spread about the nomination, local and foreign tourists have been braving high winds and rough seas to get to Batanes, and Estrella, with her easy smile and friendly but weather-beaten face, has become the subject of many postcards and promotional calendars.

"This is something new to me. I have been visited by a lot of people who give me donations and take my pictures. We want the world to know about how we live," Estrella says as she proudly shows a blue logbook containing the names of visitors over the past year that includes Australian and Canadian tourists with notes urging authorities to help preserve her house.

"I now have many friends," Estrella beams.

Estrella's grandfather Jose Dacay built the house in 1887, cobbling together corals washed from the shore and stones that are abundant in the coastal town of Ivana, one of six municipalities in Batanes.

Like all other sinandumparans, it is low-slung, with walls about a meter thick and a roof made from grass tightly bound and woven together to make it water-proof.

The family had moved elsewhere in the country in the early years. But Estrella says the family returned to the area when she was 12, and had stayed ever since.

She has never married and many of her childhood friends have died.

Hardly any change

"I have seen time come and go, but our place has not changed much," she says.

She recalls a major tsunami in 1953 that wiped out a nearby coastal village. When she was young, an earthquake caused the ground near her house to open up and spew spring water.

"See, it's still there. And my house is still here," she says, but adds the roof needs repairs.

The Batanes island group is nearer to Taiwan, just 190 km north, than to Luzon. The islands lie 860 km north of Manila and is accessible by small 60-seater turboprop planes.

The group consists of three inhabited volcanic islands surrounded by picturesque white sand beaches, breathtaking limestone cliffs and virtually unexplored interior forests. Rolling hills are covered in strikingly green patchworks of reeds and tall cogon grass that sway in the harsh winds blowing in from the sea.

The capital Basco is located on the island of Batan which lies under the shadow of the majestic 1,009-meter-high Mount Iraya, an active volcano that last erupted in 325 BC, triggering the creation of the two other islands—Sabtang and Itbayat—that now comprise the tiny provincial archipelago of 17,000 people.

Currents from the Pacific Ocean to the east, and from the South China Sea to the west clash to form rough waves that the locals have learned to conquer using wide-bottomed and bath-tub shaped boats called "fallowas."

The islands are virtually untouched, and little has changed over the past century. Electricity arrived only in the 1980s while telecommunication facilities followed in the 1990s. In many parts of Batanes power is still rationed. Transportation is also difficult, with less than 10 jeepneys ferrying people to and from the coastal towns.

Gentle people

Batanes is home to the Ivatans, gentle fisherfolk and farmers who are believed to have descended from the first wave of people who left Taiwan as early as 3,500 years ago, according to research by the National Center for Indigenous Peoples in Basco.

Spaniards who came to colonize the country in the 16th century intermarried with the locals, resulting in the Ivatans' almond eyes, aquiline noses and high cheekbones.

The Ivatans constantly battle the elements—extremely hot tropical summers from March to May, and with bitterly cold winds blowing in from China from November to February.

The rest of the year are given to strong rains and stormy weathers, because historically it lies in the Philippines' typhoon belt and nearly always has to endure the estimated 19 typhoons that pass the country on average every year.

Gov. Vicente Gato says he is hopeful that Unesco will give its nod for Batanes to be included in its list of "world heritage" sites, and by doing so open up the islands to more assistance from both the government and from other groups that could provide endowments or grants to preserve the Ivatan sites.

He says the number of tourists has been increasing every year, although provides no official figures.

Quality tourists

"While we can't prevent those who have money from visiting us, we prefer to have the quality tourists who would appreciate our culture and those who would help us preserve our heritage," Gato says.

"We don't have an ambition for too many tourists that we can't support with our facilities because development is not as fast as the increase in arrivals. We would not be able to accommodate them all."

But he agrees that the money the tourists bring and the Unesco nomination have helped put Batanes back on the national map.

"Manila is simply too far from us. The main source of livelihood for a professional is to work for the local government here. We don't have enough resources despite our vast fishing grounds and fertile lands to farm. We are still trying to develop, but it will take us years," Gato says.

"But we will get there as the Ivatans have always done," the governor adds. "We go with the wind."

AFP

RP checking reports Pinoy insurgents killed in Iraq

THE PHILIPPINES is verifying with the Iraqi military a report that Filipinos were among insurgents killed in a US-backed assault last week in Iraq, the foreign affairs department said Sunday.

Iraqi commandos, backed by US air and ground fire, assaulted a rebel training camp in the country's central region Tuesday, killing 85 suspected insurgents in one of the largest guerrilla death tolls in a single battle of the two-year insurgency.

Among the insurgents killed were Iraqis, Filipinos, Algerians, Moroccans, Afghans and Arabs, an Iraqi military official, Maj. Gen. Rashid Feleigh, told Iraqi state television last week.

"The Philippine Embassy in Baghdad is inquiring with Iraqi military authorities for confirmation of that report," said Gilbert Asuque, spokesperson of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"We want to have the basic facts before even venturing into the security implications of this," Asuque told The Associated Press by telephone.

Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, a small but brutal Muslim extremist group which has been loosely linked to al-Qaida, have condemned the US invasion of Iraq in the past but have never stated that they had deployed members to help Iraqi resistance fighters.

Hundreds of Filipino militants joined Afghans who waged an armed resistance against the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan. Among those Filipinos was Abdurajak Janjalani, who returned home and founded the Abu Sayyaf around 1990.

AP

Computer school to keep Muslims from extremism

From page A1

"The idea is to give them something worthwhile to do so they won't be tempted to join terrorist groups," Prof. Taha Basman, the council's national president, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Citing a 2004 study by the Mindanao Research Institute, Basman said Muslims with no formal education were more likely to be lured by their radical brothers or those behind terrorist groups like the Abu Sayyaf.

The institute is under the Center for Moderate Muslims, a nongovernment organization that Basman helped put up more than a year ago to correct the misconception that all Muslims were engaged in terrorism.

"Because there's no solid educational foundation, out-of-school Muslims are easily recruited by radical Muslims to tread the path of violence," he explained in Filipino.

Early this year, Basman linked up with Fr. Leonardo Mercado, executive secretary of the CBCP's ecumenical commission on interfaith dialogue, and Fr. Ben Beltran, parish priest of Smokey Mountain in Tondo.

The three thought of getting the Maharlika youth busy by offering computer lessons starting this summer.

The CBCP donated P540,000 for the purchase of 25 computers. Basman's council arranged the venue—two classrooms at the Silangan Elementary School I in Maharlika. Beltran designed the curriculum, having introduced a similar program at the Sandiwaan Learning Center.

The summer course which runs from April 11 to May 27 will accept 200 students aged between 15 and 25.

Students will be screened by a committee co-chaired by Basman, Mercado, the imam of Maharlika's Blue Mosque and the Taguig parish priest.

"They must be indigent and they should have no ties with terrorist organizations or shadowy groups," Basman said.

Christians are welcome to the pilot program, but Muslims will be given priority, he said. Some 70 percent of Muslim "migrants" from Mindanao have settled in Taguig and have had no education, he added.

The summer course will teach students how to use a computer, with emphasis on encoding using Arabic fonts. This will prepare students for jobs in embassies like those of Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, Basman said.

"We already have an understanding with these countries that they would hire our graduates after they have completed the course," he said.

"This is a good opportunity because these countries subcontract clerical jobs—such as computer encoding in Arabic—among Muslims in poor countries like the Philippines," Basman said.

The computer program will then run during the regular June-March school year, benefiting some 800 Muslim youths in Taguig.

Basman and company also plan to bring the program to Marawi, Davao and Zamboanga—cities where radical Muslims usually recruit prospective terrorists.

"In reality, 99.9 percent of the country's Muslims are moderates and only 0.1 percent are radicals," Basman said. "But we're really working to keep the remainder close to the teachings of the Koran."

And because program organizers don't want to end up with techie terrorists, the Taguig students will also be taught ethics.

TAHA M. Basman, president of the Center for Moderate Muslims, supervises an out-of-school Muslim youth at the computer summer program in Taguig.

PPI dared: Shed 'old boys club' mentality

From page A1

Its affairs are administered by a 15-person board of trustees.

"We urge the PPI to shrug off its 'old boys club' mentality of protecting one another and come out in public with its position on our complaint," Villamente told the INQUIRER by phone.

"This is to clear up the differing opinions and confusion among the employees, editors, staff and reporters of this merger, and for the sake of our jobs as well," he said.

The INQUIRER yesterday repeatedly tried to call Macasaet for comment, but his mobile phone appeared to have been turned off. Neither could he be reached at his Malaya office.

Dual positions

Manila Standard Today is a broadsheet that resulted from the merger of Manila Standard (majority-owned by businessman Enrique Razon) and Today (owned by Locsin and businessmen Manuel Zamora and Antonio Cojuangco).

The 100-strong MSEA lodged its complaint at the PPI on March 21, saying Locsin's dual positions as publisher of Manila Standard Today and as representative of the first district of Makati violated at least three provisions of the Philippine Journalists' Code of Ethics.

Lourdes "Chuchay" Fernandez, former editor in chief of Today and now co-managing editor of the merged broadsheet, had defended Locsin from the "conflict of interest" accusation, saying he had never meddled in the "treatment" of stories when he was publisher of Today.

The INQUIRER managed to reach Fernandez yesterday, but she declined to comment on Villamente's latest statement.

Locsin could not be reached on his mobile phone.

'We want to cooperate'

Villamente said the MSEA was not opposed to the merger.

"In fact, we want to cooperate," Villamente said. "What we are taking as an issue here is having a publisher and a congressman at the same time. Locsin cannot be both. He should decide whether to give up being publisher or congressman."

The MSEA also brought up Locsin's alleged "bullying and machinations to the extent of threatening the employees' security of tenure."

"We are strongly against this," the union said. "We want to cooperate with Locsin only if he is professional and civil enough to handle the matter. Since March 6, he has been pitting our people against his people. These are our colleagues, too, but Locsin's underhandedness makes them our enemies. We reject such kind of machinations."

Villamente also said the MSEA had "prima facie evidence of conflict of interest."

"If the PPI does not act on our complaint, we will still seek redress in other venues like the House of Representatives' committee on ethics and the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines," he said.

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HOLIDAY SPOILER

Burglars prove bigger problem than terrorists

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

CAT BURGLARS not terrorists came out as the worst problem for holiday-makers who went out of town during the Holy Week break.

Just as police warned earlier, robbers took advantage of home-owners leaving their houses unattended and struck with apparent impunity.

In Marikina City, for instance, six houses left unattended fell prey to robbers in just three days.

Four of the burglarized houses were in Barangay Concepcion Uno.

Biggest barangay

"This is one of the biggest barangays in the city," police chief Felipe Rojas told the INQUIRER yesterday, trying to explain the apparent upsurge in robbery incidents in the barangay.

Because of its size, police apparently had a difficult time patrolling the entire area.

Rojas added that Concepcion Uno also had a big residential community that included large areas occupied by squatters.

Damiana Sancho, 71, called the police at about 9 a.m. on Maundy Thursday to report that someone had forcibly entered the house of her neighbors in St. Claire Subdivision.

The house was in disarray but the owners were out of town.

Val Magat, 44, of Barangay Parang, also called the police at 7:15 a.m. on Good Friday.

He reported that the house of his neighbor, who had gone to Baguio City, had been ransacked.

Rolando Cardinoza, 27, of Barangay Concepcion Uno, also reported that he lost his laptop computer, bicycle, television set and several jewelry to robbers.

He was in Dagupan City when his aunt and sister discovered on Friday morning that the main door of his house had been forcibly opened.

In the evening, Samson Uy, 45, discovered that the back door of his house in Greenland Subdivision in Barangay Nangka had been destroyed by intruders.

He said he lost jewelry worth P500,000.

Wall detached

The following day, Veolita Baloloy, 46, told police that she lost a still undetermined amount of money to robbers, who detached a plywood panel at the upper floor of her house in Tumana Street, Concepcion Uno.

Hours later, Monet Macaraig, 34, also discovered that robbers had taken P20,000 worth of jewelry and other valuables from her house in Bugallon Street also in Concepcion Uno.

She and her family had gone to the province for a short vacation.

In nearby Pasig City, at least three robbery incidents were reported from Thursday to Saturday.

Ian Serranilla, 27, of Barangay San Antonio lost a disc player and a laptop, while Josephine Reyes, 42, of Barangay San Miguel, lost a cellular phone and jewelry.

Marlo Infante, 34, also discovered their office in Barangay Kapasigan had been broken into and robbers took about P12,000 from a cash box.

The burglaries happened amid heightened security in the metropolice due to threats of terrorism by the extremist Abu Sayyaf group.

Alarm raised over river

DON'T be fooled by the calm waters of the Marikina River, officials warned yesterday.

"Many parts of the river are very deep," said emergency medical worker Oliver Rafael.

Two boys, Patrick Sinsay, 5, and Arjay Noel, 6, drowned in the river on Maundy Thursday.

Because of the incident, police chief Felipe Rojas told parents to watch their children closely. "Parents should never allow their children to play near the river without someone looking after them," he said. *Edson C. Tandoc*

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Thief came through the roof, nabbed with P30,000 in coins

By DJ Yap

A SUSPECTED thief was caught in the act of carrying off P30,000 in P5 coins after breaking into a drugstore in Quezon City before dawn Friday.

Police arrested Paulo Bautista, 20, for breaking into and robbing the Fairview branch of Mercury Drug Store.

The suspect entered the closed store at 2:10 a.m. by prying open the roof with a hammer and a snip, police said.

He then reportedly took a bag of P5 coins amounting to P30,000 and put it inside his knapsack.

Bautista then tried to open the store's vault, not knowing that it was protected by a security alarm.

Responding policemen quickly collared the suspect.

Police recovered Bautista's knapsack containing the loot.

MMDA still in-charge of MacArthur today

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will still be in charge of traffic along the MacArthur Highway from Caloocan City to Pampanga up to today.

As such, MMDA men will still conduct sidewalk clearing operations in Bulacan and Pampanga.

"The President ordered us to clear the road. We expect that until (today), those coming back to Manila will use the highway," said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director yesterday.

The traffic chief said that since the middle of last week the MMDA sidewalk clearing operations unit had been clearing the northbound and southbound lanes of MacArthur Highway because of the expected heavy traffic that come with the Holy Week exodus.

But unlike in Metro Manila, Vergel de Dios explained that MMDA men do not confiscate the goods of vendors, who may be blocking portions of the four-lane highway.

"We just ask them to move away from the highway to free the road of vendors," he said.

Asked whether the agency coordinated with local officials before they conducted their operations, Vergel de Dios said the order of Malacañang for them to clear the highway was enough.

METROBRIEFS

Bogus lawyer falls

A FORMER court employee was arrested last week for posing as a lawyer and defrauding his clients of almost half a million pesos. The National Bureau of Investigation identified the suspect as Armin Arzaga, 43, of 1749 Leveriza St., Pasay City. Arzaga had allegedly demanded P467,000 from Anselma Orquiola, 36, and Annie Kotake, 38, owners of K-ANN Promotion and Training Center, as payment for his legal services. However, a check with Ma. Cristina Layusa, deputy clerk of court, revealed that Arzaga was not a lawyer. The NBI added that Arzaga started worked for the Court of Appeals but was dropped from the rolls on Oct. 4, 2002. *Margaux Ortiz*

Las Piñas still on toes

MAYOR Imelda Aguilar of Las Piñas is not letting her guard down. She is appealing to residents to be more vigilant and support the police in looking out for possible terrorist attacks in the city. Aguilar, in particular, cited the role of residents in information gathering and surveillance not only on suspected terrorists by criminals, as well.

Gas saver for bikes

JUST as gasoline prices began to rise again, Inventionhaus International Corp., which earlier came out with a gas saving device for cars, has again brought to the market a device that targets motorcycle owners. Pablo Planas, who invented both instruments, said his latest invention guaranteed 10 to 30 percent savings on fuel consumption as well as offers zero pollution. The device called Khaos Super Turbocharger for motorcycles has been released out in the market and sells for P1,690 each.

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Course Objectives:
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Course Topics: Environmental Analysis and Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Leadership and Management of Change
Target Participants: Top-level executives and decision makers
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May 16 to 27, 2005
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Course Objectives:
■ To develop implementation skills needed in each phase of the project cycle, as well as the strategic skills required to integrate and package projects into effective and sustainable programs
■ To introduce participants to the concepts, tools, and techniques required to effectively design and implement programs and projects
Course Topics: Project Design and Analysis, Project Implementation and Management, and Program Management
Target Participants: Middle managers, supervisors, and project analysts involved in the planning and implementation of development projects and programs
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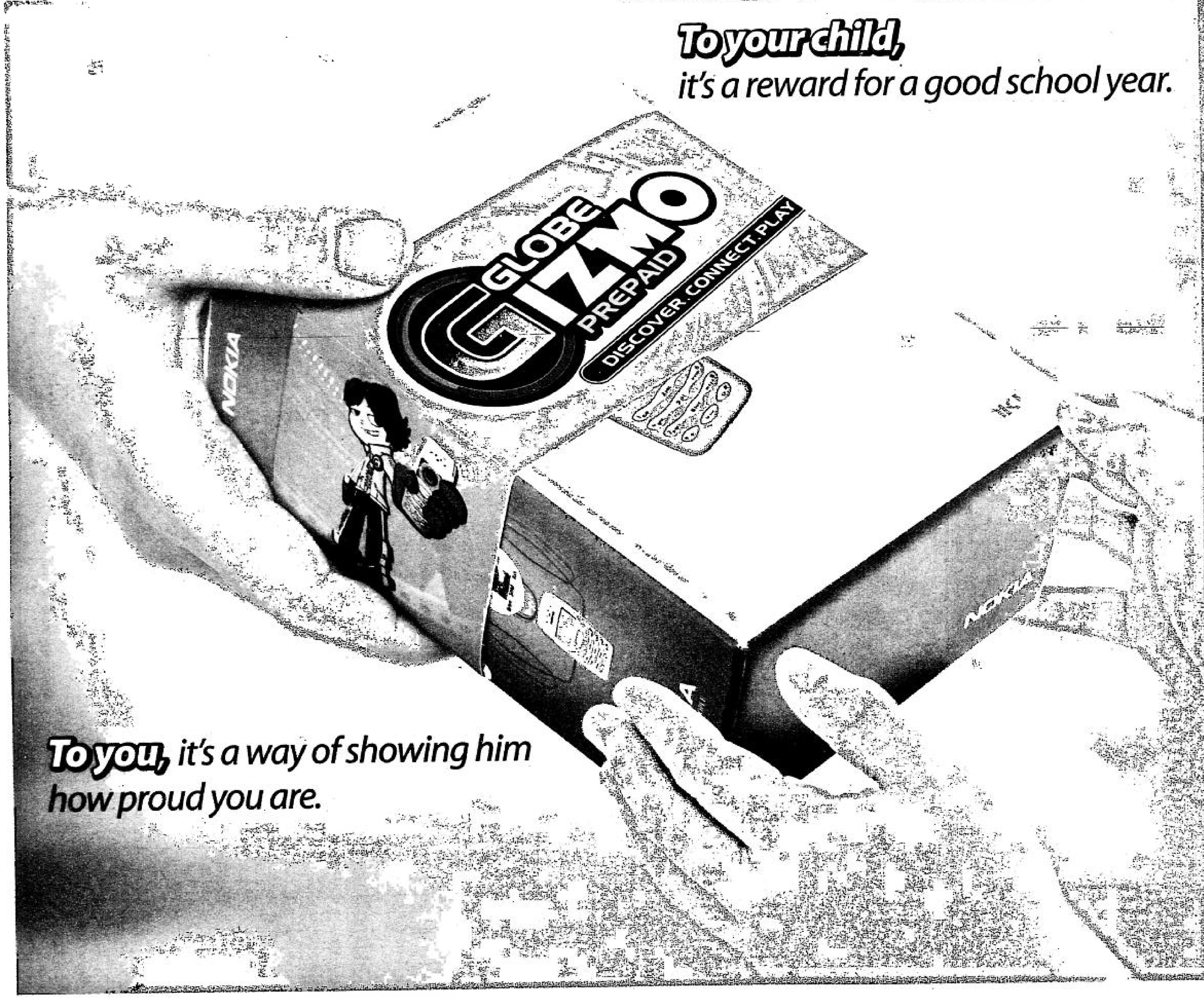

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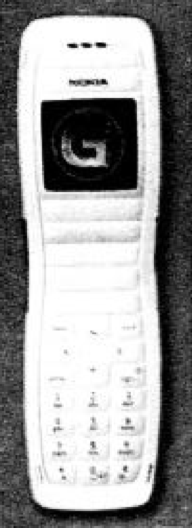

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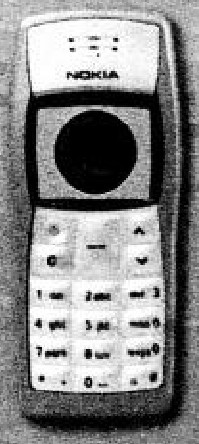

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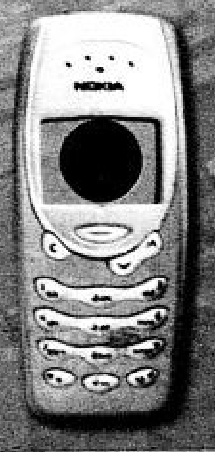

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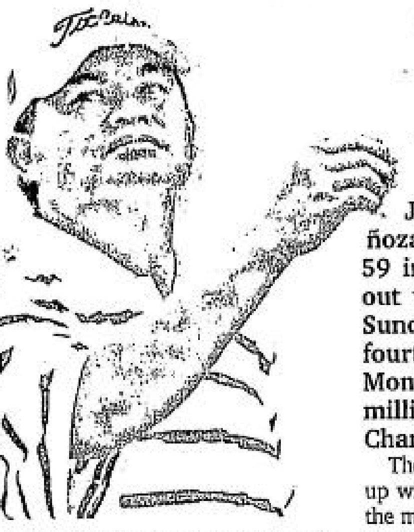
Miñoza ties for fourth



MIÑOZA: Biggest finish after the Japan Tour.

JAKARTA—Frankie Miñoza, who flirted with a record 59 in the third round, closed out with a four-under-par 66 Sunday to finish in a tie for fourth with Scotland's Colin Montgomerie in the rain-hit $1 million Enjoy Jakarta Standard Chartered Indonesia Open.

The 45-year-old Filipino ace wound up with an 18-under 262 total, which the many-time European Tour Order of Merit winner Montgomerie matched by firing a record 10-under 60 set up by nine consecutive birdies at the Cengkareng Golf Club.

Miñoza and Montgomerie still finished seven strokes behind Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant, who romped to a sensational five-stroke victory after shooting a final round 63.

In an amazing final day, the Thai with the unorthodox swing triumphed with a four-day score of 25-under 255, the lowest 72-hole total on both the Asian and European tours.

Thaworn's success won him $166,660. It was his fifth Asian Tour title and first on the European Tour.

Frenchman Raphael Jacquelin, who got to within one stroke of Thaworn on the 11th hole, settled for his career fourth second-place finish after a closing 65 for a 260 total while Australian Adam Fraser sank a hole-in-one on the 17th and a birdie on the 18th en route to a 62 for third place, a further stroke back.

"I'm happy with my game," said Miñoza, a six-time winner on the Japan Tour, where he lost his card this year by falling $1,000 short in earnings. *With a report from AFP*

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Buenavista shines

FILIPINO long distance ace Eduardo Buenavista clocked a respectable one hour, three minutes and 42 seconds in a half marathon event in South Korea yesterday.

The Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association said Buenavista, who competed in the marathon in last year's Athens Olympics, finished as the best Southeast Asian runner in a field of 12,000 and earned $4,000.

BUENAVISTA

The sketchy report, according to Patafa, said an entry from Kenya ruled the 20-km race in one hour, two minutes and 41 seconds. A Japanese runner placed second, coming in 15 seconds ahead of Buenavista.

Buenavista's participation in the high-caliber race was the second major international exposure for the athletics association courtesy of San Miguel Corp. and Pagcor.

Last week, steeplechaser Rene Herrera and Mercedita Manipol competed against European and American athletes in a short race cross court event in France as part of their preparation for the Southeast Asian Games in November.

The two distinguished themselves as the only Southeast Asian entries to be invited to the meet.

Go cited the role of the Gintong Medalya project of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo in paving the way for institutional support for sports and vowed that Patafa will reciprocate by fulfilling its target of 15 gold medals in the coming SEA Games.

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Pacquiao-Morales sets TV record

DESPITE his recent loss to Mexico's Erik Morales, Manny Pacquiao will remain the country's premier sporting money machine as a pay-per-view icon and a boxing superstar.

This was revealed yesterday by no less by Mark Taffet of HBO Pay-Per-View, who noted that the 350,000 pay-per-view buys generated by Morales-Pacquiao last Sunday surpassed by 25,000 the number churned in by the third meeting between Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera in November last year.

"Clearly, in these weight classes it's far and away the biggest revenue generator ever," Taffet said in an interview with Maxboxing.

The HBO exec said the Morales-Pacquiao clash won by the Mexican by unanimous decision raked in a total of $15.75 million.

Although Pacquiao has yet to be given his share of the pay-per-view revenue by his American promoter Murad Muhammad, talks are already circulating that the Filipino boxing superstar is now planning to sever ties with the M&M Sports top honcho.

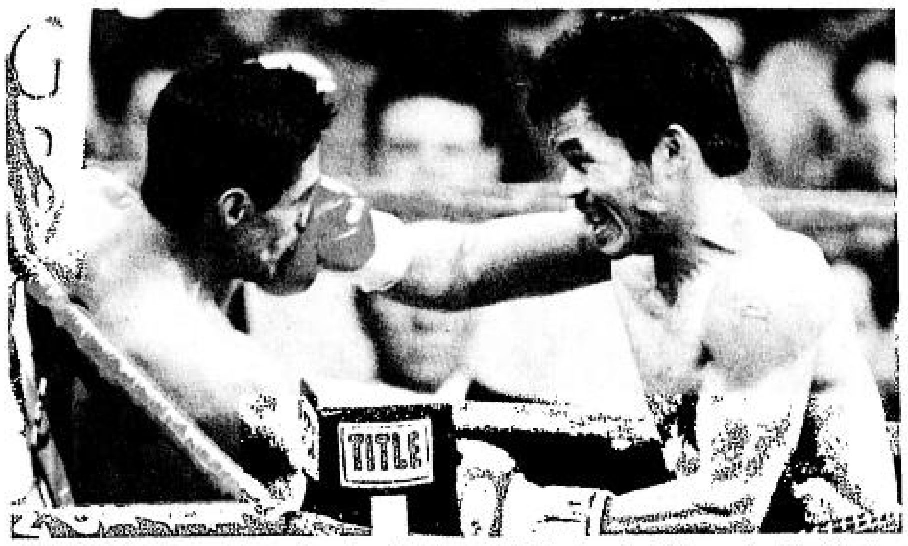
ABS-CBN reported the other day that "Pacquiao has decided to part ways with Muhammad. He is even planning to sue the fight promoter for failing to follow contract stipulations. He said that a boxing promoter should not earn bigger than the boxer himself."

Taffet indicated that Pacquiao's loss to Morales has not brought down the Filipino's stock in world boxing, what with his gallant stand despite suffering a nasty cut in the fifth round.

"This is like [the] 'Murderers Row' of the 1927 Yankees when you look at Morales, Pacquiao, Barrera and potentially the inclusion of (Juan Manuel) Marquez in the right fight," said Taffet. "There's tremendous, tremendous amounts of interest and this revenue is being generated by these guys."

Although he pointed out that nothing has yet been set in stone as to talks of a possible Morales-Pacquiao rematch, Taffet pointed out: "At this point, there are any number of prospective matchups," he says.

"There's so much noise still going on between the promoters of the respective fighters in the 126 and 130-pound weight divisions. But I do know Barrera-Morales IV and Morales-Pacquiao II would both be pay-per-view mega-fights at this point." *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*



A REMATCH between Manny Pacquiao (right) and Erik Morales should be another blockbuster.

Panasonic backs NBC tilt

ELECTRONIC giant Panasonic is the title sponsor anew of the National Basketball Conference (NBC) national championship.

Rodolfo G. Perez, the first Filipino president of Panasonic Phils., recently signed the sponsorship deal of the tourney, including a post-season international invitational event, after meeting with NBC sales director Cipriano "Pinong" Galo.

"This is definitely a big boost to our programs this year," said NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, who co-owns Laguna Spring with Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro.

The Panasonic-NBC championship will kick off on April 23 in the north with the expansion team Parañaque Jets as host on April 27 in the south to be hosted by the Cagayan de Oro Stars.

Bigger Asean Para Games up after SEA Games

By Jasmine W. Payo

LEFT blind after a car accident 26 years ago, Mike Barredo has become used to overcoming adversities.

So there's really no surprise that Barredo, chair of the Asean Para Sports Federation, remains undaunted as the country prepares to host the Asean Para Games for the first time on Dec. 14 to 21.

"It will be bigger than (the) Vietnam (2003 Para Games)," enthused Barredo, a former PSC commissioner.

From only five sport disciplines in 2003, the events have been increased to 10—athletics, aquatics, badminton, chess, goal ball, judo, powerlifting, table tennis, wheelchair basketball and wheelchair tennis.

Fencing, tenpin bowling, boccia and sailing will also be included as demonstration sports in this competition for the differently abled athletes that will be held a week after the Southeast Asian Games.

"This is only the third Para Games," said Barredo. "But it shows that there is a growing number of people with disabilities who wish to compete in sports."

Barredo understands, though, that the country's preparation has been mainly focused on the SEA Games slated Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

But he noted that there's no reason to relegate the Para Games as a mere side event since it will be participated in by more than 1,000 athletes from 11 countries.

Welcoat still a PBL contender

HIGH expectations are nothing new for Welcoat Paints. What's new is that the Paintmasters won't be getting them in the 2005 PBL Unity Cup.

The departure of the acrobatic Chester Tolomia, the high-scoring guard who has rejoined the pro league early this month, was a big blow for the Paint Masters' title bid.

Still, Welcoat has a lot of talent, experience and toughness to contend in the season-opening tournament staring April 2.

Welcoat's main ace is the 6-foot-9 Fil-Am Anthony Washington, who is not only an effective post-up player but also has a perimeter game.

Washington, however, must learn to keep his emotions in check.

Surrounding Washington are resilient players hoping to make a name for themselves.

Foremost is Jay-A Coching, who surprised everybody in the finals with his courageous performance, knocking in one big three-point shot after another.

"Jay has already matured, I'm sure he will play a major role in our campaign this time," said team manager Boy Lapid. "He's our silent operator. He has a deep knowledge of the game."

The other is former NCAA MVP Leo Najorda, who gave a good account of himself in the last conference with his relentless efforts in transition and off the glass.

The Paint Masters, proud holders of five titles, are hoping to put the demons to bed after another failed attempt at the championship in February—the third straight time the Paint Masters were beaten in the finals.

Caloy Garcia, the youthful Welcoat coach, hopes that misfortune will not happen again.

After forging an agreement with the College of St. Benilde, the Paint Masters are looking more athletic than before, what with the presence of several key Blazers players like point-guard Paolo Orbeta, sweet-shooting Carlo Manding and Jay Sagad.

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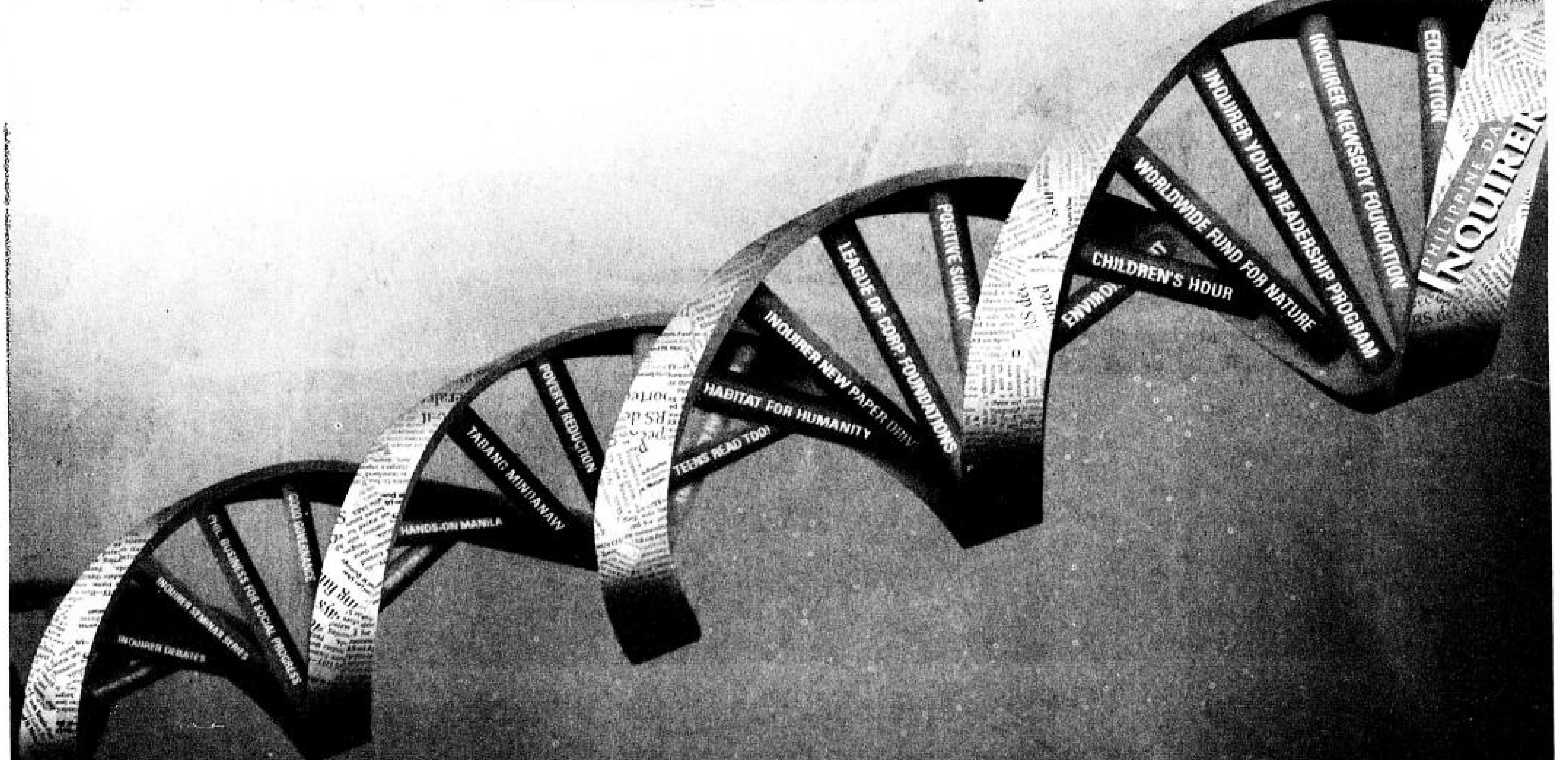

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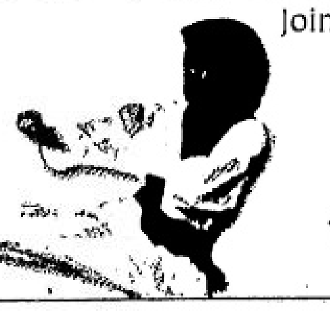

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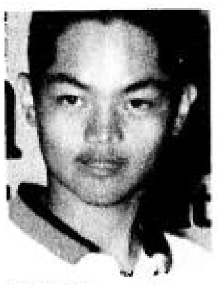
JAYVIE Agojo backstops La Salle-Greenhills.

Jungolf club tilt kicks off Samsung Tour today


BIBAT: On roster

THE FIRST Jungolf National Club Championship gets going at the Mt. Malarayat and Camp Aguinaldo courses today to usher in this year's Samsung Jungolf Tour.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos, Philippine Airlines president Jimmy Bautista, Jungolf president Raoul Lachica and retired general Roberto Santiago, the Aguinaldo GM, will hit the ceremonial drives during the opening rites at Camp Aguinaldo before the 7 a.m. tee-off.

Some 112 jungolfers representing 28 clubs, schools and organizations are entered in the three-day event, the first of 10 tournaments making up the summer series and organized by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines.

For the first time in many years, players in the 18-21 years bracket including Philippine Ladies Open winner Jayvie Agojo and national player Michael Bibat have been allowed to play in the circuit.

Agojo beefs up the La Salle-Greenhills teams while Bibat plays for the crack Southwoods Masters.

Golfers in the special division, Class A and Class B will compete in Division I while those in Classes C, D and E will be vying for honors in Division II. It will be a four-to-play, three-to-count tournament.

Teams entered are Sta. Elena, Camp Aguinaldo (2), Malarayat, Southwoods-Masters, Southwoods-Legends, Valley, La Salle (2), Riviera (2) and Ateneo (2) in Division I and Camp Aguinaldo, Valley, La Salle (2), Riviera (4), The Junior Golf League (3) and Orchard in Division II.

Reigning Junior World champion JR Gonzales is playing for Aguinaldo, the Superal siblings are carrying the colors of Orchard, while the multititled Dottie Ardina is representing Riviera in Division II play.

At stake in the meet are slots to the Callaway World Jungolf Championship in San Diego, California, in July. The first phase of the San Diego qualifier will be held in Canlubang on April 18-20, followed by the Sherwood Hills leg on April 25-27.

Also scheduled is the first ever National Jungolf Championship at Southwoods on May 17-20, with the Montecillo Cup held in honor of jungolf founder Amalia Montecillo at stake.

The summer schedule:

March 28-30 Jungolf National Club Championship, Mt. Malarayat and Camp Aguinaldo; April 5-7 Camp John Hay, Baguio; April 11-13 Tat Filipinas/Riviera; April 18-20 Junior World Qualifying Stage 1, Canlubang/Riviera; April 25-27 Junior World Qualifying Stage 2, Sherwood Hills/Riviera; May 2-4 Tagaytay Midlands/Riviera; May 9-11, Riviera; May 17-20, Montecillo Cup, Southwoods; May 23-25, Calatagan; May 30-June 1, to be announced.

Villarete, Patrimonio reign again

RAYMOND Villarete downed Joshua Tan Ho, 6-4, 6-3, to rule the 18-under division of the Gov. Muslim "Wahab" Akbar Age-Group tennis championships at the PCA courts in Plaza Dilao, Paco, Manila, recently.

Villarete, representing the Philippine Columbian Association, led seven other champions in the tough tournament supported by Nassau-Prince, the tournament's official ball and racket.

Christine Patrimonio, daughter of basketball legend Alvin Patrimonio, also stamped her class in the girls' 14-under class by easily defeating Zhane Quitara, 6-1, 6-2.

Like Villarete, Patrimonio scored her second victory in as many tournaments.

Christine's younger sister, Clarice, however, failed to extract revenge on last year's tormentor Regina Gantiago, bowing, 4-6, 2-6, in the 12-under finals.

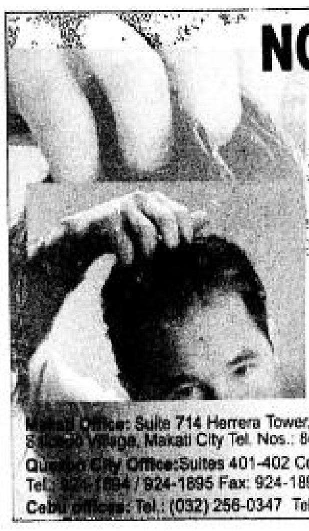
Young sensation Jacob Lagman needed only two sets to demolish Pocholo Macalino, 7-5, 7-5, in the 10-under unisex division to also clinch his second straight title in the annual netfest supported by Basilan Governor Akbar.

Tan Ho, however, redeemed himself by downing Russel Arcilla in the 16-under boys, while Akio Sy ruled the 14-under boys by defeating Kim Saraza, 7-6 (3), 6-4.

In the girls' 16-under division, Bambi Zoleta trounced Tracy Amoranto, 7-6 (6), 6-4.

Akbar said the event is aimed at discovering new local talents for future international competitions.

"I'm satisfied with the way our young netters are improving their wares every edition," said Akbar, who is also the prime figure in the successful PCA Open last November 2001.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LPC 3-cock derby today

METRO Manila's only scheduled cockfighting derby kicks off today at the Las Piñas Coliseum. The 3-cock event features more than 50 fights with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Well-known cockers Raymund Burgos of Batangas and Eric Ramos of Las Piñas will host the event which stakes a cash prize of P300,000. Submission of entries will be today from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. For inquiries, call 8731040, 8743910 or 0926-7450375. Meanwhile, the next edition of Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines 7-Cock derby is scheduled on April 4 and 6. Pepito Ngo and Gerry Ramos topped the fifth leg recently after both entries tallied six wins and one loss each. Also slated at Las Piñas Coliseum is the 330 K Big Event 6-Cock Derby on April 9.

Antonio strikes twice

POPULAR cockfighter Patrick Antonio achieved a rare feat on March 17 when he topped two big-time derbies held simultaneously at the Pampanga Coliseum in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga, and at the San Jose Cockpit in San Jose, Batangas. Using the high-flying Zamboanga fowls of the Primallion brothers, Antonio first bagged the title in Pampanga Coliseum's 4-cock event where 33 participants from Central Luzon saw action. Antonio's Team Sagupaan then racked up four straight wins to sweep the Batangas derby. Antonio's Complexor 3000 entry emerged victorious in a field of 40 entries. "As far as I can remember, this is only the second time that I emerged as champion in two separate derbies in one night," Antonio said. "The proven training and conditioning system of Sagupaan did it again."

Tribute to Elorde rival

CARLOS Juan Ortiz, one of the longest-reigning lightweight champions of the world, will receive Philippine boxing's distinguished award given in honor of the man he outdueled and revered.

Ortiz, who gained, lost and regained the lightweight belt in a six-year span that started in 1962, is here to receive the Elorde Memorial Trophy, and an 18-carat gold ring, in ceremonies during the 2005 Elorde Annual Awards slated at the Mandarin Hotel on March 30. The event is sponsored by Pagcor, Smart, PCSO, Ginebra San Miguel, Family Rubbing Alcohol, Northwest Airlines, Casa Belrina Travel, Reli Tours, Gardenia, Elorde-Sphere Gym and Elorde Sports Zone in Cagayan.

Ortiz beat Da Flash in a lightweight title clash on Feb. 15, 1964, at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. Elorde, the reigning junior lightweight king at the time, moved up in weight to battle Ortiz.

Tam-od gains next round

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Micah Tam-od outlasted April Santos, 3-6, 6-1, 6-1, Saturday in the unisex 10-under division to lead the opening-day winners Saturday in the 2005 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Puerto Princesa Tennis Club here.

Tam-od joined Francisco Santos, who edged Khrizelle Sampaton, 6-3, 6-4, in the next round of the Milo netfest organized by CTW, supported by adidas and sanctioned by Philta. In other matches, Raffy Delavin blanked Anito Prieto, 6-0, 6-0, in the boys' 14-under class, Diana Chiu nipped Jennifer dela Cruz, 7-6, 7-6, and Cherry Chiu tripped Jacklyn Santos, 6-3, 7-6, in the girls' 14-under.

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WASHINGTON WIZARDS vs. SEATTLE SONICS
LIVE! 9:00 AM

MARCH 29
MAVERICKS PISTONS 8:30 AM
76ERS KINGS 11:00 AM

MARCH 30
LA CLIPPERS CLEVELAND CAVALIERS
8:00 AM

MARCH 31
SEATTLE SONICS
SAN ANTONIO SPURS
9:30 AM

APRIL 1
MINNESOTA T'WOLVES
LA LAKERS
11:30 AM

APRIL 2
MINNESOTA T'WOLVES
PHOENIX SUNS
10:00 AM

APRIL 3
MAGIC NETS 8:30 AM
MIAMI HEAT NEW ORLEANS HORNETS 12:00 NN

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Illini, Cardinals take long route to Final 4

ROSEMONT, Illinois—Deron Williams scored 22 points to help top-seeded Illinois earn a stunning 90-89 overtime win over third seed Arizona in the Chicago Regional final of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament Saturday.

Trailing 75-60 with four minutes left, the Illini (36-1) mounted a late comeback to clinch a meeting with Louisville in next weekend's Final Four in St Louis.

Williams landed a three-pointer with 38 seconds left in regulation time to cap a 20-5 run which sent the game into overtime.

In the Albuquerque Regional final, Larry O'Bannon notched 24 points as the Louisville Cardinals rallied from a 20-point deficit to beat the West Virginia Mountaineers, 93-85, in overtime.

The thrilling win put fourth-seeded Louisville (33-4) in the Final Four for the eighth time. Rick Pitino also became the first coach to take three different teams to the national semifinals, following up his achievements with Providence and Kentucky.

ARIZONA guard Jawann McClellan covers his face after Illinois completed its amazing comeback from 15 points down. REUTERS

It was the first time since 1992 that two regional finals went into overtime.

The Arizona Wildcats (30-7) took their big lead with an 18-6 surge late in the second half.

But Illinois totally dominated the final four minutes and then hung on in overtime after opening up a five-point advantage.

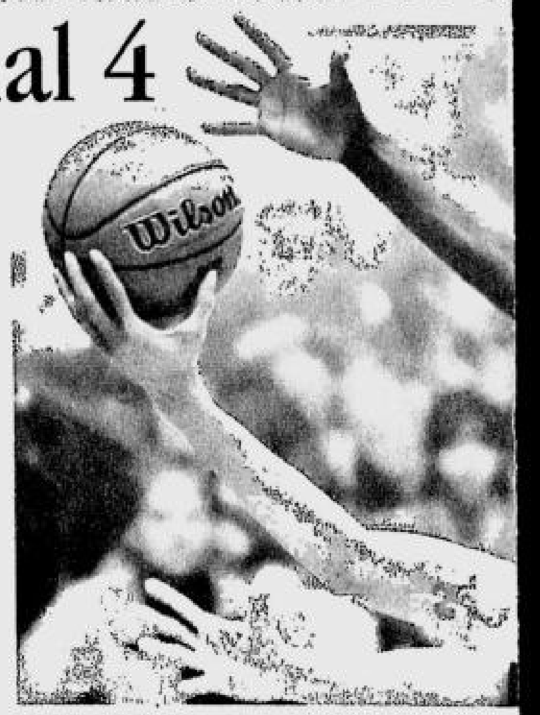
Luther Head added 20 points as Illinois, the nation's No. 1-ranked team for most of the year, moved into the Final Four for the first time since 1989.

Channing Frye led Arizona with 24 points on 11-for-14 shooting.

Taquan Dean overcame severe leg cramps to grab 23 points for Louisville, which outscored the seventh-seeded Mountaineers 16-8 in overtime.

Francisco Garcia added 13 points for the Cardinals before fouling out with more than four minutes to play in regulation.

The last two spots in the Final Four will be filled Sunday when North Carolina meets Wisconsin in the Syracuse Regional final and Michigan State faces Kentucky in the Austin section. *Reuters*



UNIVERSITY of West Virginia forward Tyrone Sally (l
forward Juan Palacios. The Cardinals won in overtime

Sorenstam leaves foes far behind

RANCHO MIRAGE, California—Sweden's Annika Sorenstam took a major step in her quest for a Grand Slam sweep and a piece of LPGA history, seizing a five-stroke lead at the Kraft Nabisco Championship here Saturday.

Top-ranked Sorenstam took command of the year's first major tournament with a six-under-par 66 third round to finish 54 holes at 11-under par 205, leaving only three rivals nearer than 10 strokes at the $1.8-million event.

"I like when my plan comes together," Sorenstam said. "I stayed patient. I had a lot of fun out there. I played aggressive when I needed and played safe when I thought it was a good time to do that. Turned out really good."

Sorenstam seeks her fifth victory in as many starts, a feat that would match Nancy Lopez's 27-year-old LPGA record win streak, and her ninth major title, including six in the past four years.

"This is probably as good of golf as I've played on a consistent level for a long time," Sorenstam said.

The title would also lift Sorenstam, who won here in 2001 and 2002, into third place on the all-time career win list with her 59th LPGA crown.

Her $16 million in career money is already $5 million better than her nearest rival.

Rosie Jones, a 45-year-old American who began the day level with Sorenstam atop the leaderboard, fired a 71 to stand second on 210, two strokes ahead of compatriot Cristie Kerr and and South Korea's Mi Hyun Kim.

Sorenstam, whose declared goal for 2005 is a Grand Slam sweep, is unwilling to take another title for granted, however.

"I'm going to keep reminding myself there's a long way to go and don't want to take anything for granted," Sorenstam said.

Sorenstam birdied two of the first three holes, added back-to-back birdies at seven and eight and used wedge shots to set up a 12-foot birdie at the 12th and a six-footer at 15. Her 66 was the day's low round by three shots.

"Obviously I'm very happy the way I played. It was very solid off the tee. I played some good approach shots, made clutch putts when I needed. It was just a great day for me out there and obviously I'm in good shape." *AFP*

Federer rips Belgian rival

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida—Top-ranked Roger Federer began a bid for his first Nasdaq-100 Open title by beating Olivier Rochus of Belgium, 6-3, 6-1, in the second round on Saturday.

"It's always hard to start a tournament," he said. "But I actually felt quite comfortable and quite confident going into today's match."

That's understandable, since Federer's record is 43-1 since the start of the US Open last August.

He has won three of the four Grand Slam tournaments but seeks a breakthrough at Key Biscayne, where his best finish was as the runner-up to Andre Agassi in 2002. The humid, 90-degree F (32-degree C) weather that sapped players on Saturday is often part of the challenge in the 12-day event.

"Everywhere you touch, it's wet," Federer said. "Here you really can see who is fit and who is not fit, I have the feeling. I felt good out there today, so this is a good sign for the rest of the tournament."

In women's play, top-seeded Amelie Mauresmo overcame a slow start to beat Russian teenager Maria Kirilenko, 4-6, 6-4, 6-1. The 18-year-old Kirilenko faded in the two-hour midday match and committed 16 unforced errors in the final set.

Six-time champion Andre Agassi beat Paul-Henri Mathieu, 7-5, 6-4. The No. 9-seeded Agassi lost only three points on his first serve in his first match since he withdrew from the Pacific Life Open last week because of a sore left toe.

American qualifier Jeff Morrison reached the third round by upsetting No. 10-seeded Joachim Johansson of Sweden, 7-6 (3), 6-4. *AP*

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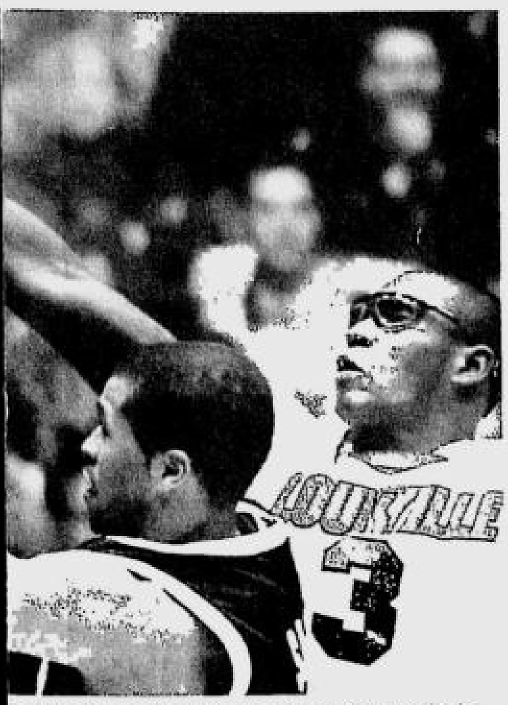

eft) challenges the defense of Louisville Cardinals
to advance to the NCAA semifinals. REUTERS

Bobcats forge Shaq-size upset

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Primoz Brezec had a career-high 27 points and 11 rebounds Saturday to lead the Charlotte Bobcats to one of their most surprising victories of the season, a huge 94-92 upset over the Shaquille O'Neal-led Miami Heat.

With Charlotte up 94-91, Jason Hart fouled Miami star Dwyane Wade, who went to the line and made his first free throw with 4 seconds to play. He missed the second and got his own rebound, but missed his corner at the buzzer.

"I was just trying to win the game," Brezec said. "We've lost so many games in the final seconds. We had to get this one, we led most of the way. I am glad we were able to finish it out."

Gerald Wallace added 17 points for Charlotte and Emeka Okafor had 12 before leaving with a sprained left ankle late in the third quarter. Brevin Knight had 16 assists.

O'Neal led the Heat with 26 points and 16 rebounds, and Wade finished with 19 points. Miami (53-17) leads the NBA's overall standings, a half-game in front of Phoenix. The Heat beat the Suns, 125-115, on Friday night in Miami.

"This one is my fault tonight," O'Neal said. "I've got to get the guys more ready. We took them too lightly, and I take the blame. As the leader of the team, it's my job to get the guys fired up. It won't ever happen again."

In Orlando, Florida, Shawn Marion had 27 points and 14 rebounds, Joe Johnson added 26 points, and Steve Nash had 23 points and 12 assists to lead the Phoenix Suns past the Magic, 118-116.

Grant Hill led Orlando with 26 points.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Sam Cassell scored 23 points in just 22 minutes, and Kevin Garnett had 13 points, eight rebounds and eight assists as the Minnesota Timberwolves crushed the Nets, 96-75.

Cassell, who has missed eight of 13 games this month and 23 of the last 39 because of a hamstring injury, shot 10-for-13 and had four rebounds and three assists.

In Atlanta, Chris Bosh scored 32 points and Jalen Rose added 26 to help the Toronto Raptors edge the Hawks, 109-104, and snap a four-game road losing streak.

Atlanta, an NBA-worst 11-58, has lost eight straight games since winning in overtime at Toronto on March 11. That victory snapped a 23-game road losing streak and 13 consecutive defeats overall for the Hawks, who have dropped 21 of their last 22.

In Chicago, Eddy Curry scored a season-high 27 points and the Bulls beat the Indiana Pacers, 100-96, for its fifth straight win.

In Dallas, Michael Finley scored 26 points, making all eight of his 3-pointers, and the Mavericks humbled the Cleveland Cavaliers, 117-86, for its largest margin of victory this season.

In Salt Lake City, Raja Bell scored a season-high 23 points to help the Utah Jazz beat the Milwaukee Bucks, 94-89, and coach Jerry Sloan move past Red Auerbach for sixth place on the career victory list with 939.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony had 28 points and the Nuggets whipped the Sacramaneto Kings, 113-99, for their sixth straight win to improve to 21-5 under coach George Karl and move within a game of Memphis for the No. 7 seed in the Western Conference.

In Portland, Oregon, Damon Stoudamire had 25 points and the Trail Blazers clipped the New York Knicks, 103-96, winning for only the second time since Kevin Pritchard took over as coach. AP

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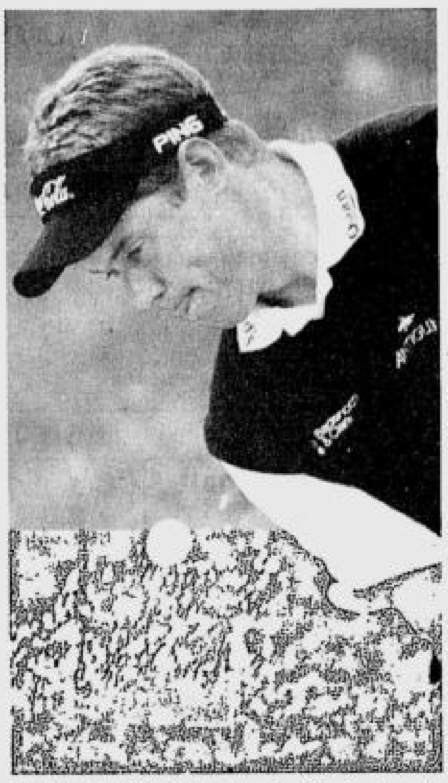

LEE WESTWOOD blasts out of the bunker at No. 9 during the second round. AP

Westwood gains share of the lead

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—Britain's Lee Westwood and Americans Joe Durant and Steve Jones grabbed a share of the second-round lead at the rain-hit Players' Championship before play was suspended due to darkness on Saturday.

With nearly half the field still on the course at the TPC at Sawgrass and more violent thunderstorms and heavy rain forecast for Sunday, golf's unofficial fifth major appears headed for a Monday finish.

The second round will resume at 0730 local time on Sunday, with the third round beginning at 1030.

Tournament director Mark Russell said, however, that "all options" remained open, including a rare Tuesday finish for the $8 million event.

The last time a PGA Tour competition ended on a Tuesday was in 1980 at the Tucson Open.

Westwood, who began the day one shot behind overnight leader Jones, experienced a rollercoaster start to his round but had a steady back nine on the way to a three-under 69 and a 10-under total of 134.

On a foggy day at the Stadium Course, the Englishman birdied the first two holes before faltering with a double-bogey six at the fourth. He rallied with birdies on six, seven and 11 and closed with seven consecutive pars.

The day did not begin well for Durant with a bogey on the first. But the 40-year-old American responded by carding the round of the day, seizing seven birdies and an eagle in a seven-under 65.

Jones was also on 10-under with nine holes of his round to play. Fellow American Zach Johnson (70) and Briton Luke Donald, who had five holes to play, were one stroke back in joint fourth place.

Australia's Adam Scott, trying to become the first player to successfully defend this title, hit a bogey-free, four-under 68 to join a group of five players on seven-under.

Britain's Graeme McDowell, who only earned his spot in the elite field with a second-place finish at Bay Hill last week, was also seven-under after a 66.

Irishman Padraig Harrington, runner-up here in the last two years, was also at seven-under with nine holes of his second round to go.

The 'Fab Four' of world No. 1 Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods, Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson have been as disappointing as the weather.

Fijian Singh ran up a quadruple-bogey eight at the 18th on the way to a 74 for 141, three-under.

World No. 3 Els, coming off back-to-back wins in Dubai and Qatar, was on 142 following a second consecutive 71.

Woods, on three-under through 10 holes, and Mickelson, four-under after nine. *Reuters*

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1	COACH CARTER
2	ROBOTS
3	MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4	ALONE IN THE DARK
5	SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
6	HITCH
7	CONFIDENCE
8	BAHAY NI LOLA 2
9	HOSTAGE
10	RESERVED
11	RESERVED
12	RESERVED

sm city fairview

1	FINAL CUT	
2	SHIRI	smcinemasexclusive
3	CURSED	
4	HOSTAGE	
5	BAHAY NI LOLA 2	
6	ALONE IN THE DARK	
7	MS. CONGENIALITY 2	
8	ROBOTS	
9	MILLION DOLLAR BABY	
10	CONSTANTINE	
11	HITCH	
12	SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD	

sm city north edsa

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4	COACH CARTER
5	ROBOTS
6	HOSTAGE
7	MS. CONGENIALITY 2
8	ALONE IN THE DARK

sm city manila

1	CONSTANTINE	
2	ALONE IN THE DARK	
3	LOVE ME IF YOU DARE	smcinemasexclusive
4	MS. CONGENIALITY	
5	HITCH	
6	HOSTAGE	
7	SHIRI	smcinemasexclusive
8	SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD	
9	ROBOTS	
10	BAHAY NI LOLA 2	
11	CURSED	
12	COACH CARTER	

sm city sta. mesa

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5	MS. CONGENIALITY
6	SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
7	ROBOTS
8	HOSTAGE
9	ALONE IN THE DARK
10	HITCH

sm city southmall

1	HOSTAGE
2	CURSED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED
5	CONFIDENCE
6	SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
7	ALONE IN THE DARK
8	MS. CONGENIALITY 2
9	ROBOTS
10	BAHAY NI LOLA 2

sm city bicutan

1	MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2	BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3	ROBOTS
4	ALONE IN THE DARK

sm cinema tutuban

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

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1	ROBOTS
2	ALONE IN THE DARK
3	MS CONGENIALITY 2
4	BAHAY NI LOLA 2

LUZON

sm city pampanga

1	HOSTAGE
2	FINAL CUT
3	MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4	HITCH
5	ROBOTS
6	BAHAY NI LOLA 2

sm city baguio

1	SON OF THE MASK 2
2	GOSPEL OF JOHN
3	RACING STRIPES
4	HITCH

sm city batangas

1	SON OF THE MASK	
2	SHIRI	smcinemasexclusive
3	HITCH	
4	CURSED	

sm city dasmariñas

1	ROBOTS	
2	BAHAY NI LOLA 2	
3	SHIRI	smcinemasexclusive
4	MILLION DOLLAR BABY	

sm city marilao

1	CURSED	
2	SHIRI	smcinemasexclusive
3	BAHAY NI LOLA 2	
4	SON OF THE MASK	

sm city bacoor

1	MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2	CONFIDENCE
3	MS. CONGENIALITY
4	HOSTAGE
5	ROBOTS
6	BAHAY NI LOLA 2
7	SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
8	CURSED

sm city lucena

1	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2	SON OF THE MASK 2
3	BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4	CONSTANTINE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu

1	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2	ROBOTS
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED
5	RAY
6	BAHAY NI LOAL 2
7	HOSTAGE
8	HITCH

sm city iloilo

1	BINHEN NG MANAOAG
2	RESERVED
3	SON OF THE MASK 2
4	MILLION DOLLAR BABY
5	THE AVIATOR
6	ROBOTS
7	RESERVED
8	HOSTAGE

sm city davao

1	ROBOTS
2	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
3	SON OF THE MASK 2
4	LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
5	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
6	HITCH

sm city cagayan de oro

1	THE AVIATOR
2	SON OF THE MASK 2
3	INFECTION
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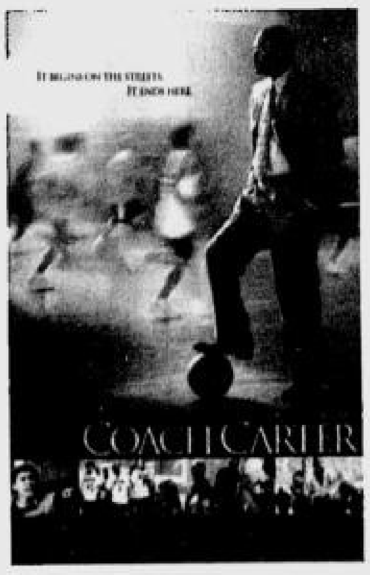

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		2	ALONE IN THE DARK
		THX	MS. CONGENIALITY 2 2:00, 4:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
		4	SPANGLISH
		5	ROBOTS
		6	HITCH
		7	COACH CARTER
G1	GLORIETTA 1	1	ROBOTS
		2	MISS CONGENIALITY 2
		3	ALONE IN THE DARK
		4	HOSTAGE
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX 1	MISS CONGENIALITY 2
		2	ALONE IN THE DARK
		3	ROBOTS
		4	HOSTAGE
		5	HITCH
ACC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1	RAY
		2	HITCH
		3	ROBOTS
		4	THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
		5	CLOSED
GB1	GRENBELT 1	1	ROBOTS 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30,7:30,9:30
		2	MISS CONGENIALITY 2 11:05, 1:40, 4:15, 6:50, 9:25
GB3	GRENBELT 1	THX 1	MISS CONGENIALITY 2 1 05, 3 40, 6 15, 8 50, 11 25 GUARANTEED SEATS
		THX 2	MISS CONGENIALITY 2 3 05, 5 40, 8 15, 10 50 GUARANTEED SEATS
		3	COACH CARTER 12.50, 3.30, 6.10, 8 50, 11 30 GUARANTEED SEATS
		4	SPANGLISH 1:30, 4 00, 6 30, 9.00. 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
		5	ROBOTS 2:30, 4 30, 6 30, 8 30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS

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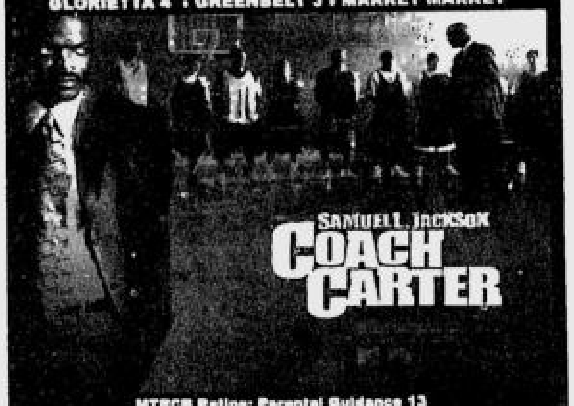

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La Salle top guns ready for best of Ateneo

LA SALLE'S top guns and the best from Ateneo renew their fabled school rivalry when the 17th La Salle–Ateneo Golf Classic fires off on April 4 at the sprawling four-course Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

A week before action starts, organizers predict another big success for the event presented by PLDT and Smart as more than 700 participants will vie for top honors in various divisions with the prestigious overall Classic Cup at stake.

La Salle, which retired the perpetual Ambassador Carlos Valdes Cup after winning the overall title three years in a row, is expected to go all out to validate its golf supremacy over Ateneo, which has been gearing up to snatch the overall crown of meet backed by ICTSI, OOCL, Johnny Air Cargo with support from American Express, Cost U Less, Eagle Express, EPCIB, Institute Saintre, Manila Bank, Salonpas and Transcom.

La Salle alumni president Lito Tanjuatco and Ateneo Golf Foundation head Iggy Clavecilla said an agreement was forged by the organizers with PLDT/Smart not only for the telecommunications giant to back the event for the next three years, but more significantly earmark part of the sponsorship deal for scholarship grants for a promising junior golfer from each school starting this coming school year.

Deadline for registration is on April 1. For inquiries, call the La Salle alumni affairs office at 5236158/5265612/7227750 or the Ateneo alumni affairs office at 4266081.

NBI starts inquiry vs Taulava

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation starts today its investigation into the charges of falsification of public documents and perjury against suspended Philippine Basketball Association ace Asi Taulava of Talk 'N Text.

NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz said Taulava is under investigation for allegedly altering his mother's birth certificate and "for knowingly making untruthful statements in affidavits which were submitted to the Bureau of Immigration for his application for recognition of Filipino citizenship."

Diaz also said that Yuri del Valle Sr., the municipal civil registrar of Barangay San Jose, Bobon, Samar, faces the charge of infidelity of the custody of public documents.

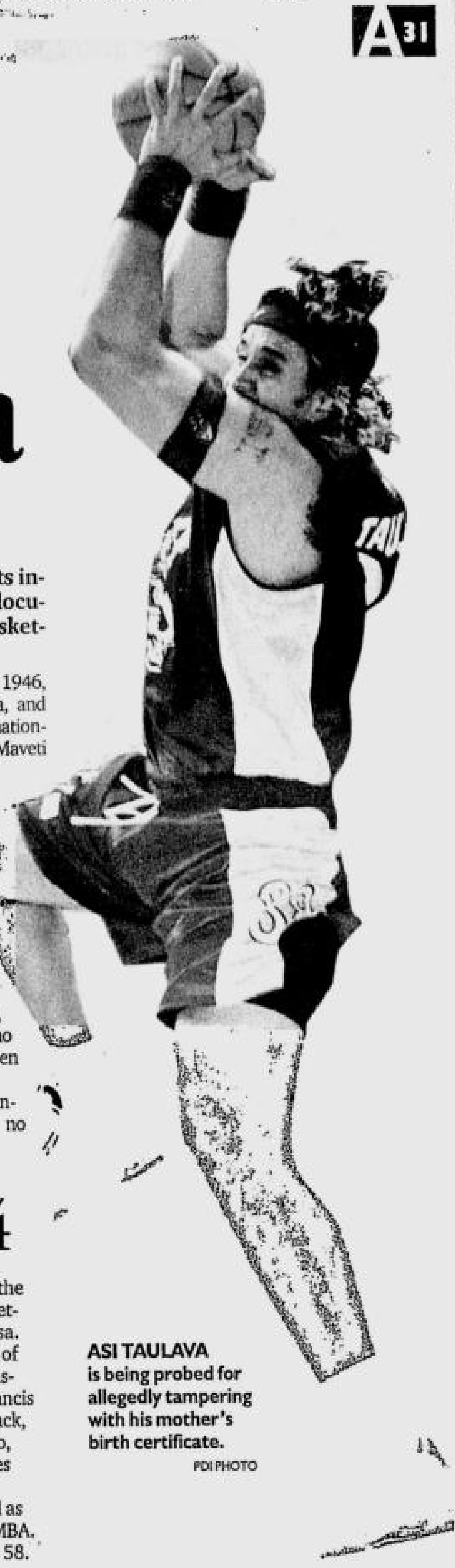
Taulava was one of the six foreign-born PBA players the Department of Justice had recommended for deportation last year for faking their Filipino citizenship.

In a letter to the NBI, acting US Immigration attache Julian Briola had said that Taulava's mother, Pauline, was born on July 13, 1946, in Vaotu'u, Tongatapu, Tonga, and was the daughter of Tongan nationals Semisi Mateaki and Maveti Mokofisi.

Taulava's camp had earlier claimed that Pauline was born in San Jose, Bobon, Samar, to Ana Hernandez and Felipe Mateaki.

The NBI, however, said a check with the National Statistics Office and the municipal registrar of Bobon, Samar, showed there were no records of marriage between Hernandez and Mateaki.

The NBI added that Hernandez and Mateaki also had no records of birth in Bobon.



ASI TAULAVA is being probed for allegedly tampering with his mother's birth certificate.

PDI PHOTO

Narvasa cage camp begins April 4

AYN SPORTS Management Group, led by former Shell and Purefoods head coach Chito Narvasa, in coordination with RS Sports, is conducting a basketball camp for the 53 Sta. Lucia subdivisions all over Metro Manila this summer.

A newly developed teaching program will be held in seven different venues so that participants can choose the most convenient site for them.

The first module will start on April 4.

A combination of methods that have been successfully established by US and Chinese basketball camps, the AYN course will teach individual skills, and explain the roles of the different positions, use practical applications and correct practice methods. The strong emphasis on fundamentals and teamwork rather than individual play will make students understand the game better.

Participants can thereafter enroll in a specialized program under the "Rising Stars of Philippine Basketball," to be conducted by Narvasa.

He will be supported by some of the best coaches in Philippine basketball such as Yeng Guiao, Alfrancis Chua, Jong Uichico, Norman Black, Derick Pumaren, Perry Ronquillo, national team mentor Chot Reyes and lawyer-brother Ogie, who coached in the UAAP and served as commissioner of the PABL and MBA.

For inquiries, call 6872156 to 58.

Go slams Dayrit's SEAG marketing scheme

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

CHESS and athletics head Go Teng Kok, the high profile and controversial sports leader, is peeved at former Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit for saying recently that "having two marketing arms to seek commercial sponsors for the Southeast Asian Games is counter-productive and will result in less income for the organizers." So peeved was Go that he proceeded to write this corner, reacting to my piece last March 21 where I quoted Dayrit as saying that the exclusivity right of one marketing group should be upheld because that would benefit the [SEA Games] organizers in the end.

Go said, "It is probably wiser for Mr. Dayrit to refrain from making comments on issues that he has dolorously failed to address when he was at the helm."

When he was still the POC president, Dayrit had entered into a contract with Malaysia-based Inter-Sports Marketing for the exclusive marketing of this year's 23rd SEA Games. While there is no question about the entry of Inter-Sports to market the Games having been the marketing arm of the last four SEA Games, many officials of the NSAs (national sports associations) bewailed the fact that Dayrit did not consult them on the terms and conditions of the contract wherein Dayrit assigned a 25-percent commission to the marketing agent for all domestic and international sponsors that would be solicited.

In his letter, Go said: "As a responsible officer of the Ways and Means Committee of both the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee please allow me to correct Mr. Celso Dayrit on the marketing approach for the Southeast Asian Games.

"The present members of the Philsoc are merely trying to salvage a situation, which Mr. Dayrit created in signing an onerous contract with the Malaysian marketing firm.

"Prior to the assumption of office by Mr. Jose Cojuangco as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, Mr. Dayrit had already signed a contract awarding exclusive marketing rights to the Malaysia-based company.

"In this contract, which was never shown for review by POC chair Robert Aventajado and first vice president Steve Hontiveros, Dayrit mindlessly granted the firm a sweetheart amount of 25 percent commission for both domestic and international accounts that would be solicited. In simple language the firm would collect $250,000 for every million-dollar deal. I am not a marketing expert but I have heard that a 25-percent commission is not even an industry rate. What convinced Mr. Dayrit that his decision was solely founded on conscience and had no shade of avarice is a matter we would leave to speculation.

"Mr. Cojuangco's efforts that have solicited about P440 million would be reduced by no less than P110 million if we abide by Mr. Dayrit's mathematical genius.

"So, for Mr. Dayrit to criticize the handling of the marketing issues is not only unethical but also a clear sign that Pontius Pilate resides in the former POC president.

"I would also like to stress that responsible and reputable individuals, whose sense of nationalism transcends their individual concerns, now man both Philsoc and POC. It is probably wiser for Mr. Dayrit to refrain from making comments on issues that he has dolorously failed to address when he was at the helm."

The contract, signed on July 22, 2003, between the POC, represented by then POC president Celso Dayrit, and Inter-Sports Marketing of Malaysia, represented by its director Rethinavelu, granted the POC the right to appoint Inter-Sports as its exclusive promoter, marketing, merchandising and licensing agent to solicit sponsors in connection with the 23rd SEA Games. Nothing wrong with that. But what raised many questions were the terms and conditions of the contract which assigned a generous commission of 25 percent to the marketing agent of the gross cash sponsorship received from private sponsors and 10 percent of the gross cash sponsorship received from government or government-controlled corporations. This onerous provision was the root of the problem.

***

PACQUIAO, VICTIM OF A RIP-OFF. My sources told me that it was not only shrewd and glib-tongued American promoter Murad Muhammad who "milked" Manny Pacquiao of his hard-earned dollars, but there were other people in his camp who also made money.

"Murad was not the only one who pulled the caper," said my informant.

"There were other schemers, too," adding that Pacquiao was clearly a victim of a "rip-off." He was simply too trusting of people, including hangers-on. Next time around, Pacquiao should not surround himself with an entourage of sycophants looking to make a quick buck.

SOAR, Coach E classes next month

THE INTERNATIONAL Basketball Academy (IBA) yesterday announced the schedule of classes for the School of Officiating and Advanced Refereeing (SOAR) and the Coach E Basketball School starting next month.

Former NBA referee Jesse Thompson will conduct a three-day clinic for beginners on April 2, 5 and 7 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Experienced referees, on the other hand, will have their own three-day seminar on April 18, 20 and 22 that will also prepare them for the International Association of Accredited Basketball Officials exam. Fee is P1,500.

Coach E classes for new students open shop on April 4 with a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Old students start on April 5 at the same venue with a Tuesday-Thursday-Friday schedule from 1 p.m.

The special varsity-elite class for members of varsity teams training pools 12 years old and above are held every Monday starting on April 4, at the adidas Sportskamp at the Fort.

For inquiries, call the IBA at 6311195, 0921-7562639 or e-mail iba_phil@yahoo.com.

Indon F-3 driver out to steal thunder from Filipino bets

A TEAM based in Japan featuring Indonesian driver Ananda Mikola will race against eight Philippine-based squads in the opening two rounds of the 2005 Asian Formula 3 Grand Prix on April 9-10 at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Mikola, the superstar of Indonesia racing who ruled the penultimate leg of last year's circuit in his native country, will be the lead driver of the Three Bond Team, a regular fixture in the Japanese Formula 3 circuit now making a foray on the Asian racing scene.

The Japanese team's bid, however, will be tested by local squads led by Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO, last year's overall team champion owned by Pepon Marave, a veteran in the local racing circuit.

As of yesterday, nine foreign drivers are set to race against seven Filipino standouts led by Marave himself who is on the comeback trail after concentrating on managing his team last year.

The field includes four Irishmen, including John O'Hara, who finished runner-up to overall individual champion Christian Jones of Australia last year.

Also racing in the opening leg of the circuit sponsored by Addict Mobile, Motolite, Boysen, Yokohama, Lima City Hotel and PLDT MyDSL field are James Winslow of Britain, Katsuhiro Konno of Japan and Rodolfo Avila of Macau.

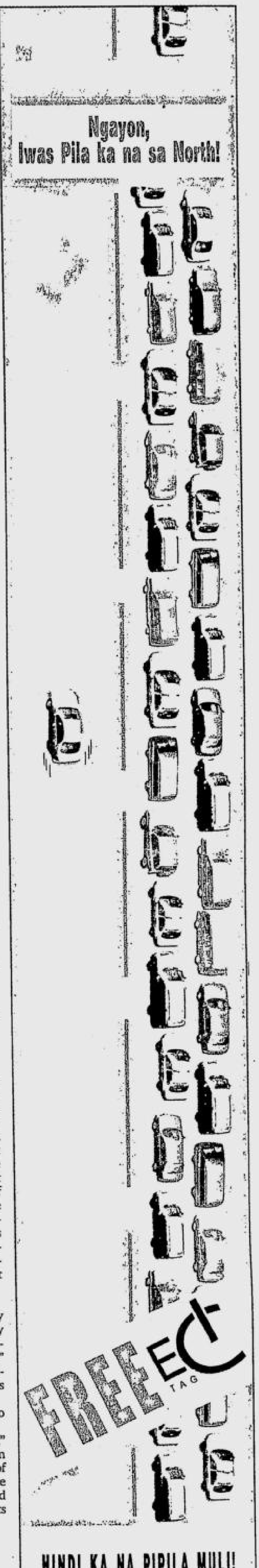
They will be up against Marave, Tyson Sy, Dado Peña, Enzo Pastor, John Marcelo, Roland Hermoso and JP Tuason who make up the Filipino contingent in the circuit that has been expanded to 12 legs from 10 last year.

Notably missing from the field this year is Mark Goddard of Britain, who has opted to stay in the sidelines and concentrate on managing his squad, Team Goddard Inc. Taking over Goddard's slot in the team is Peña, son of AF3 Corp. chair Ed Peña, who will team up with Irishman Greg Murphy.

Jones has found a new partner in Marcelo, younger brother of the late Filipino racing ace Jovy Marcelo who died in a race crash many years ago.

The other teams competing this year are Speed Tech Asia, represented by Sy and Hermoso, the Denso Hanjin FJ3 duo of Irishman Robert Block, Fujitsu Team Toms composed of O'Hara and Avila, Team Tec Asia represented by Pastor and Tuason Racing bannered by JP Tuason.

In all, nine teams will be on the starting grid for the opening leg in Batangas, with more teams expected to join the field when the 12-leg circuit goes to China and Indonesia.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Top officials behind Velo Challenge

NATIONAL team head coach Jomel Lorenzo and veteran national commissaire Renato del Mundo lead the list of technical officials handling the 10-race day First Philippine Velo Challenge being staged at the newly refurbished Amoranto Velodrome in Quezon City.

Lorenzo owns an Asian Games (1982 New Delhi) bronze medal, three Asian championships bronze medals in 1983, 1985 and 1987; two gold medals in the 1981 Manila Southeast Asian Games and a gold in each of the three SEA Games editions after that to go with several RP records he booked in Asian and world meets. All his medals and records were in track events.

Del Mundo earned his spurs in the UCI-supervised course in Manila in 1980 and in a UCI international commissaire's course in 1995 in Ipoh, Malaysia. Del Mundo specializes in both track and road disciplines.

Multimedaled Joselito Santos, currently a member of the national coaching staff for the 23rd SEA Games, Domingo Villanueva, Renato Mier and Renato Dolosa, all former road and track champions, are among the officials of the event co-presented by the First Gentleman's Foundation and Air21 and Tour Pilipinas Inc.

The Velo Challenge is supported by Pagcor and backed by Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte, the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Isuzu D-Max, Sharp Phils., San Miguel Corp., dzSR Sports Radio 918 khz, Vittoria Tires, 93.9 iFM, RMN dzXL 558, David's Salon and Intrasports.

Gerardo Amar and Candido Querimit are also among the officials of the Velo Challenge where David's Salon, a staunch supporter of women's cycling, will raffle off gift certificates to fans who will watch the Velo Challenge on April 2, 7, 12, 14, 19 and -26, and May 3 and 7.

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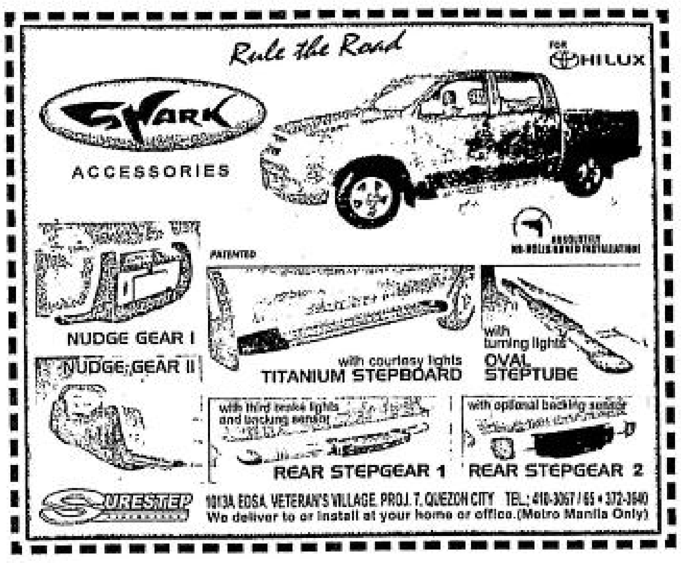
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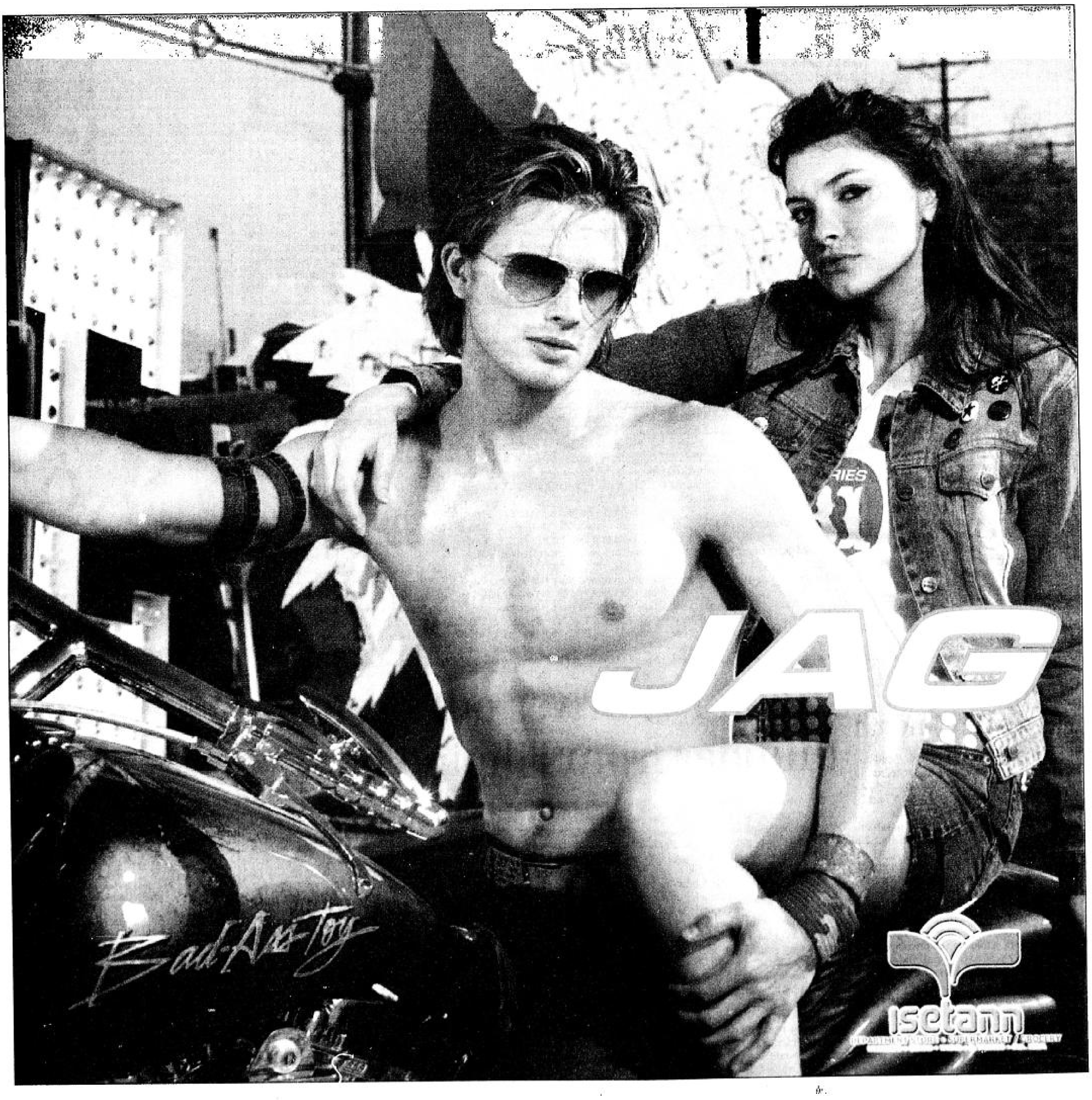

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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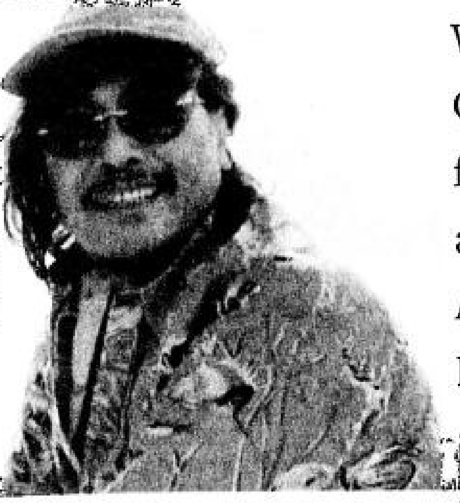
Creator of heroes


NEW SERIES deal with ABS-CBN is biggest ever, says the inimitable Carlo J.

Writer-filmmaker Carlo J. Caparas, father of Panday—and Totoy Bato, Andres de Saya, Maestro, Harimanok and Juan Tornado—stays on overdrive

By Nini Valera

THREE weeks before Fernando Poe Jr. died, the action king was deep in negotiation for another movie with writer-director Carlo J. Caparas.

"We were discussing 'Ang Ninong Kong Kampeon,' where he would play the role of a boxer, and Jiro Mano would play his godson," Caparas told INQUIRER Entertainment last week.

"The story is beautiful; it would have been a good film," Caparas said.

He revealed that months earlier, he and FPJ had a falling out over politics. "Our friendship was affected during the last presidential elections. But when we talked [again], there were no hard feelings."

The rift between the actor and Caparas, who created Panday, FPJ's iconic film character, occurred when the director and his wife, movie producer Donna Villa, threw their support behind President Macapagal-Arroyo, against whom FPJ ran.

"My orientation is to look for heroes," Caparas explained in Filipino. "At that time, I was looking for a leader, not a hero. We've had so many male presidents already, and most of them were corrupt. FPJ respected my decision."

But their friendship, which began in 1979 after they met on the set of the first "Panday" movie, survived the political tension. They remained friends until FPJ's death last December.

A mythical character created for *komiks*, Panday was transformed by FPJ into the ultimate symbol of triumph for the downtrodden. The collaboration spawned three more movies—"Panday, Ang Pagbabalik," "Panday, Ikatlong Yugto," and "Panday, Ikaapat na Aklat"—all blockbusters. Two more Panday-esque films were made for other actors, but these did not come close to the original vision of Caparas and FPJ.

Working-class hero

Panday lives, even if FPJ is gone.

"I am still here, after all," said Caparas. "And even when I'm dead, Panday will remain alive."

Jericho Rosales breathes new life into Panday when ABS-CBN's *fantaserye* based on Caparas' working-class hero hits the airwaves in June.

"Jericho wanted the project," claimed Caparas. "When we were told of his interest in being the new generation Panday, Ronnie and I gave him the thumbs-up."

The negotiations for the rights of Panday as a TV series was another feat for Caparas, who ruled the pages of Pinoy *komiks* for at least two decades.

"For it I was paid the highest ever fee for the rights to a story," he said of the deal with the network. Donna had brokered it. "Of course I won't tell you how much."

This is not the first made-for-TV "Panday," however. In 1986, "Panday" became a prime time TV attraction after Caparas agreed to an animated version on RPN 9. Using the image of FPJ, the series ran for more than a year and strengthened the character's "brand image" in the mass market, according to Caparas.

FPJ's legacy

"When we came out with that animated version, we were tapping into another market," Caparas noted. "So far, Panday is the biggest character I've created, and it's still growing strong. It's part of FPJ's legacy to the Filipinos."

Ironically, Caparas confessed that he had outgrown Panday. "That's why I recommended somebody else to direct the TV series," he said. That person is Toto Natividad, a choice that FPJ had also approved, he added.

"But I'm behind the series as creative consultant," said Caparas. "From the concept to the special effects, I have the final approval."

The creator in Caparas would forever be on overdrive.

"It's easier for me to create characters than to make films," he confided. "You can create heroes that would live through several generations in *komiks*. In movies, you are merely a craftsman lifting the story and characters from other materials. But I create from nothing. Before these heroes make it to [the big screen] they are already larger than life in the pages of the *komiks*."

Among Caparas' *komiks* heroes are Andres De Saya, Totoy Bato, Maestro, Harimanok and Juan Tornado.

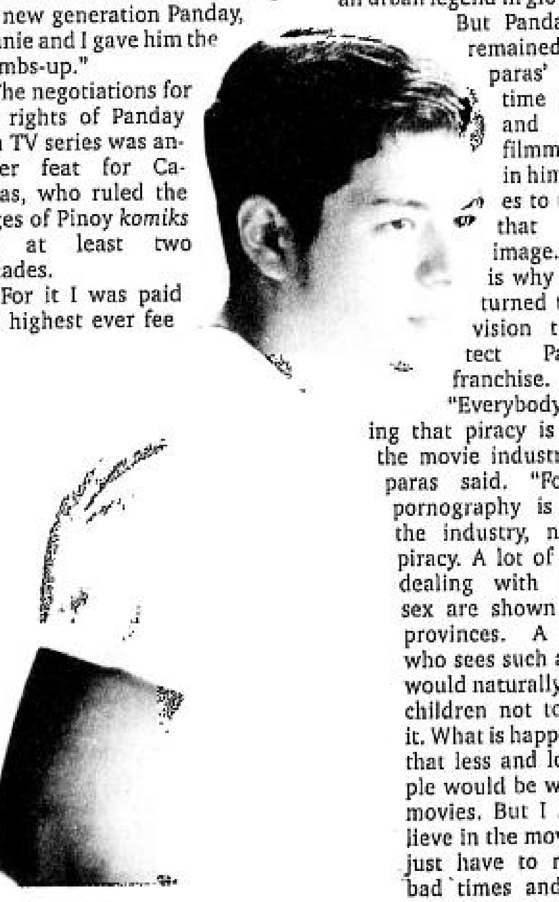
Andres De Saya, which set off three movies starring then lovebirds Vic Vargas and Gloria Diaz, was Caparas' light-hearted take on the sensitive male. By transforming the macho into the henpecked husband who takes pride in being one, Caparas equalized the playing field between the sexes.

Yet another take on the Pinoy macho is Totoy Bato, an underdog street fighter also immortalized in the movies by FPJ. Totoy Bato, Caparas pointed out, came way ahead of Rocky.

"FPJ and I were laughing when 'Rocky' was shown here," he said. "We told ourselves that we beat Hollywood in creating an urban legend in gloves."

But Panday has remained Caparas' all-time hero, and the filmmaker in him refuses to tarnish that hero's image. Which is why he has turned to television to protect Panday's franchise.

"Everybody is saying that piracy is killing the movie industry," Caparas said. "For me, pornography is killing the industry, not just piracy. A lot of movies dealing with explicit sex are shown in the provinces. A father who sees such a movie would naturally tell his children not to watch it. What is happening is that less and less people would be watching movies. But I still believe in the movies. We just have to ride the bad times and create more heroes."


JERICHO Rosales, the new Panday

WHAT'S INSIDE

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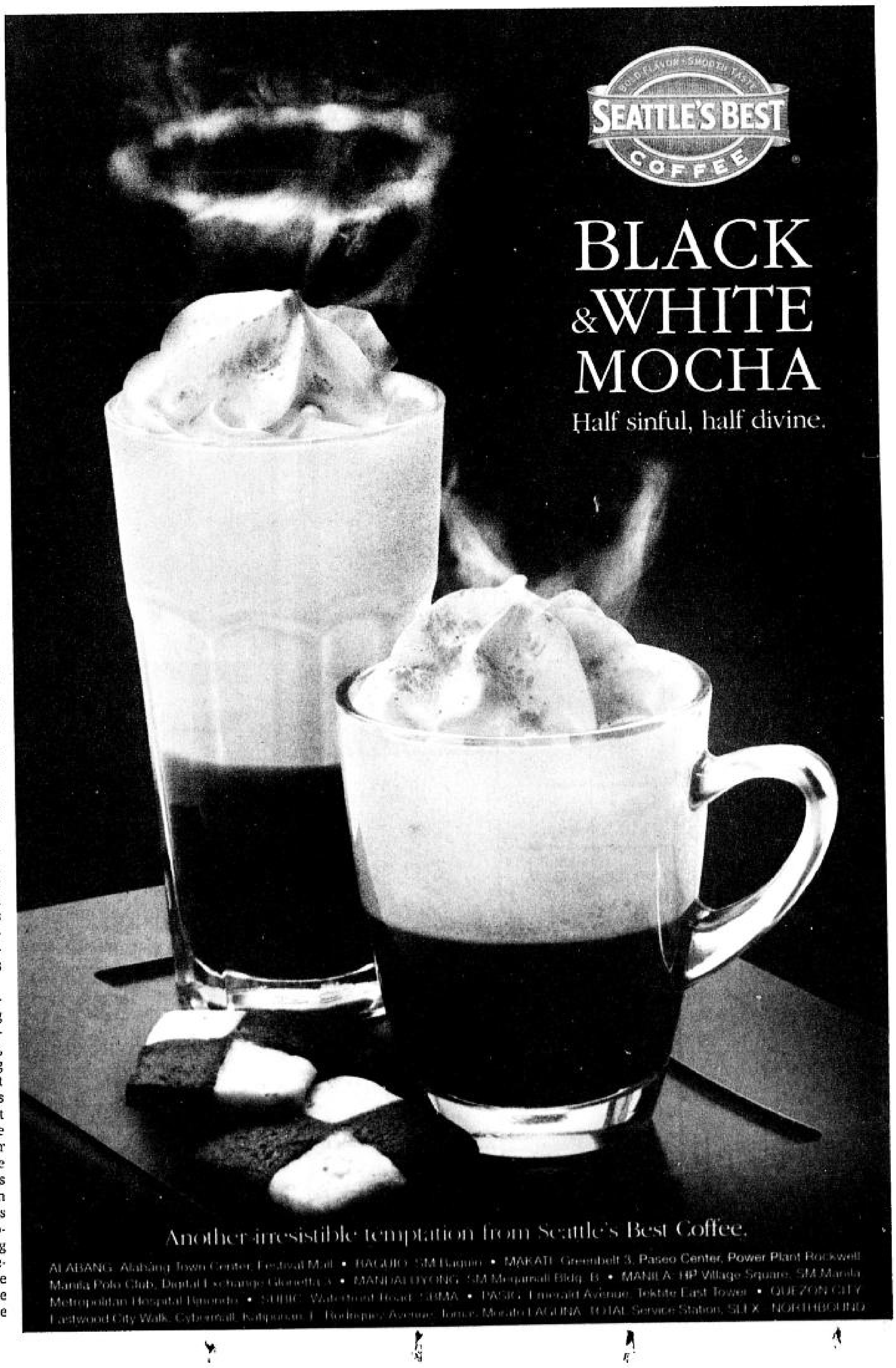
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Robot with a 'heart'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ANIMATED movies about mechanized creatures are nothing new, but "Robots" is an exceptional crowd-pleaser because it shows that even machines have "heart." To be sure, at this stage of the development of robotics, this is still a fantasy, but it could be a preview of exciting things to come.

Whether or not robots eventually become surrogate humans, this film's winsome, antic storytelling still makes it a winner in our book, and in viewers' hearts.

It tells the story of an impoverished but loving robot family surnamed Copperbottom, whose future is threatened by the cruel decision of an evil entrepreneur named Ratchet to stop manufacturing affordable spare parts, effectively rendering millions of humble robots like the Copperbottoms obsolete.

Young Rodney Copperbottom goes to the big city to convince the company's top boss, Bigweld, to rescind the cruel order. It turns out, however, that Bigweld has been rendered inutile by Ratchet, so our young hero now has to not just rescue his threatened friends and loved ones, but also help Bigweld grab power back from his greedy former subaltern.

This basic conflict is made more eventful by the lively ensemble work of many colorful characters, most of them voiced by big names like **Robin Williams**, **Halle Berry**, **Drew Carey**, **Mel Brooks** and **Greg Kinnear**.

Standouts include the busybody Fender (Williams); Aunt Fanny with the huge posterior; Ratchet's mother, who's even more evil than he is, and the little gizmo Rodney has invented, which gets him out of a lot of tight spots—until it loses heart.

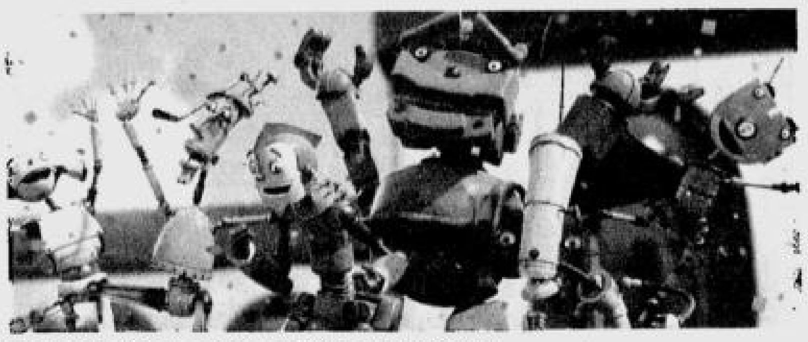
This droll touch of giving the robots human feelings makes the film a charmer, and invites us to care about what happens to Rodney and his mechanical friends.

Another big plus factor is the production's look, which is more stylish than most animated features' visuals. Bigweld's city of the future is truly awesome in its breadth, scope and beauty—a deft combination of slick sci-fi scenery and *pachinko* game board circuitry.

Also impressive is the "lighting" effected by the state-of-the-art animation, which makes many scenes look subtly evocative or arrestingly dramatic.

Finally, we're entertained by the movie's seemingly endless bits of inventive comic actions and witty dialogue. This production doesn't take anything for granted, and is clearly bent on giving us the time of our lives.

Now, how can you not love a movie like that?



THE ROBOT Rodney Copperbottom and his friends

If they do say so themselves

WHAT do show biz stars have in common? Well, for one thing, they're congenitally full of themselves. Some exuberantly smug examples:

Kim Basinger: I'm a highly, highly, highly creative human being!

Jerry Lewis: I'm a multifaceted, talented, wealthy, internationally famous genius!

Arnold Schwarzenegger: Why do people make fun of me just because I am the biggest, strongest and most beautiful man in the world?

Joan Collins: I'm a very shy woman, very sensitive, very emotional, very volatile, with quite a sense of humor!

Jean Claude Van Damme: Deep inside me, I'm so sensitive!

Charlie Chaplin: I am known in parts of the world where people have never heard of Jesus Christ!

Oliver Reed: Do you know what I am? I'm successful. Destroy me, and you destroy the British film industry!

Rob Lowe: I was never the spear carrier, I was always the star. Always!

Michael Jackson: I was sent to this earth to bring happiness and inspiration to people, especially children!

Leonardo DiCaprio: I've been planted here to be a vessel for acting!

Roseanne Barr: Some people hate me 'cause I'm so ahead of my time. But I don't think I was born too soon, I think the backward people were born too late!

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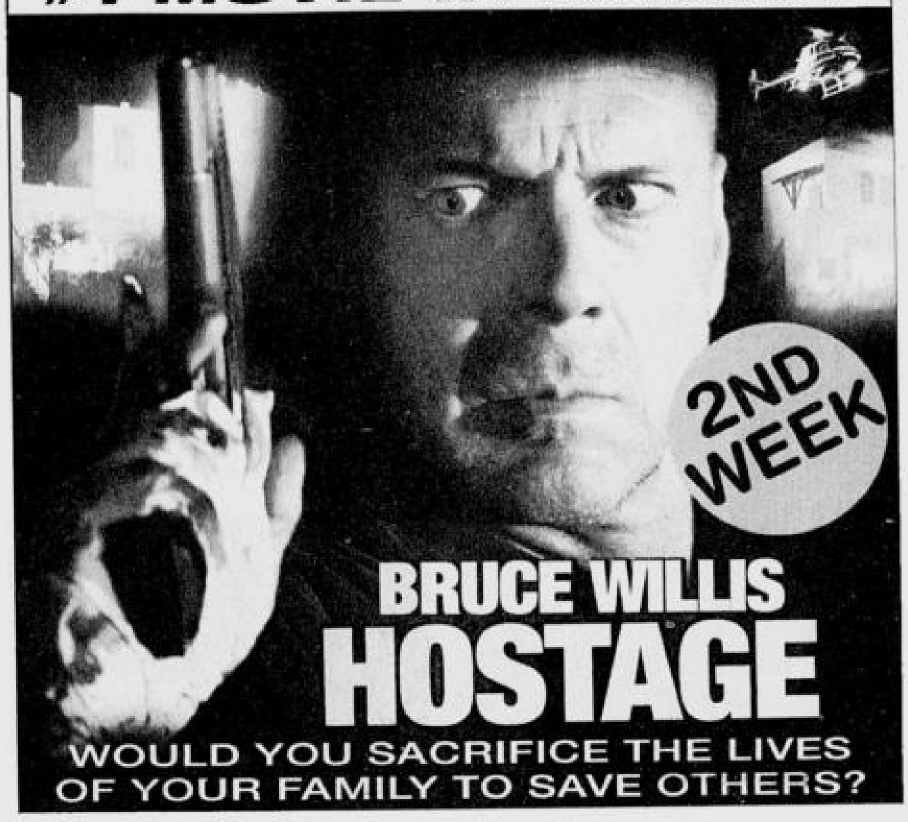

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TAKE FIVE

LAW

Jude Law, two-timer

JUDE Law, The Irresistible, portrays Dan, an aspiring novelist who falls in love with two women in Columbia Pictures' "Closer."

What drew you to the role?

Patrick Marber's (the playwright on whose work the movie is based) extraordinary dialogue and its concentrated focus on the four characters.

How did you find working in close quarters with only three other actors (Julia Roberts, Clive Owen and Natalie Portman)?

There was never a day where you could kind of take it easy because virtually every scene has a definite emotional pitch. You were either opening up to someone or closing yourself up. It was quite intense.

What is your character Dan like?

Someone who's really living in a sort of cocoon, a frustrated novelist, until he meets Alice (Portman), who becomes his muse. Through her, he blossoms. The relationship is really responsible for encouraging him to be confident enough to find the woman he really thinks he loves. Unfortunately, that relationship seems to be doomed from the get-go. It gives him some of the happiest days of his life, but he eventually throws himself away by pouring himself so wholeheartedly into it."

But the battle is between the two male lead characters?

"There's a certain amount of ego going on between them. You could argue that for them it is almost more important that they're screwing over the other guy than getting the girl they're in love with."

("Closer" opens soon in Metro Manila.)

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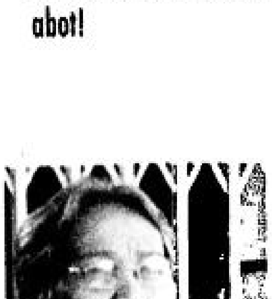
Manolito Abellar
Receives calls on his SMART cellphone



"Nun wala pang P10.00 per call once a month lang, ngayon parati na akong tumatawag."

Norberta Flores
Tawag ng tawag sa Baguio

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Final battle and redemption

By Amy Mosura
Contributor

DAVID Boreanaz

THERE'S nothing tougher than being part of a cult hit, especially if it's one of the most scrutinized in recent pop culture history. Which is why it's such a surprise that "Angel's" final, gone-before-its-time fifth season packs such a punch. A heady cocktail of influences—including film noir, heroic quests, action dramas, and the supernatural vampire genre, with a little bit of pilfering from Batman thrown in—"Angel" hits a pretty big stride, triumphantly emerging from under the shadow of its sister series, "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," in both theme and scope.

Interestingly, it is this season that seems, on the outside, the most compromised. From its expensive, epic, and vaguely unintelligible fourth season, the "Angel" staff was asked to scale down by its US network by cutting the show's budget and making it more accessible to viewers. As such, the series' powers that be—creator Joss Whedon, showrunner Jeffrey Bell, and the rest of the formidable creative staff—re-structured the show, jettisoning cast members (leading lady Charisma Carpenter, a holdover from the Buffy days, is a notable casualty), and promising to hold off on the epic, self-contained drama that was allegedly alienating viewers.

New theme

In accepting the bargain to keep the show on air, the producers also lent it a crafty new theme: Angel (David Boreanaz), the titular vampire with a soul, has agreed to his own devil's bargain, taking the reins of his series-long nemesis, the evil law firm Wolfram and Hart.

The premise gives the show an extra charge in dramatizing adult challenges in the fantasy idiom. Angel and his cohorts Wesley (Alexis Denisof), Fred (Amy Acker), Gunn (J. August Richards) and the green demon Lorne (Andy Hallett) must now fight evil while staying in the institution they have long tried to bring down, with all of the resources—books, laboratories, cars, weapons, lawyers—once denied them. The rather transparent metaphor—that once an idealistic youth grows up, he could face the reality of joining organizations he used to question, with the hope of changing the system from the inside—gains a surprising amount of complexity.

> The fifth season of 'Angel' may be the last that its followers will see in a long while

In one forthcoming episode, the hilarious "Smile Time," dour Angel suddenly turns into a small felt hand puppet engagingly voiced by Boreanaz. This easily ranks among the best and most creative hours of television anyone can see this year. Better yet, the episode is accessible to viewers unfamiliar with the mythology involved in Angel's quest for redemption.

Spike's back

Other episodes, like the stunning stand-alone dramas "Lineage," "Destiny" and "Damage," require quite a bit of familiarity with the world of Buffy, but even the expositionary dialogue is well-integrated into the story flow. And if you're bored, every so often a fight explodes between Angel and the newest member of his team.

That's right, Spike's back, too. A great part of "Angel's" new accessibility stems from its latest cast member—James Marsters, who plays the other vampire with a soul on Buffy, and who now brings his presence to "Angel."

The crackling chemistry that Marsters and Boreanaz showed even in their earliest Buffy scenes survives intact in "Angel," leading even Whedon to crow: "I finally found the perfect ingénue for Angel—Spike."

Sadly, this fifth season is the last anyone will see of the vivid universe for some time. But fans can take heart in another thing: The US network president was quoted as saying that his management made a big mistake in pulling out "Angel" too soon. Somewhere out there, a soul-ed vampire is laughing.

(The author is a publicist of ABS-CBN. "Angel's" fifth season premieres tonight on the network's Studio 23.)

Now on DVD

THE BOX-OFFICE hit "Miss Congeniality," starring Sandra Bullock, is now out on DVD and VCD from Warner Home Video. The deluxe edition features a sneak peek footage of "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous," and a gift set that includes a CD soundtrack of the sequel.

"EXORCIST: The Beginning" also debuts on DVD and VCD. A Morgan Creek production and prequel to the 1973 phenomenon "The Exorcist," the film stars Stellan Skarsgard, Izabella Scorupco and James D'Arcy. It is directed by Renny Harlin. DVD bonus includes a commentary by the director and a behind-the-scenes feature. "Exorcist: The Beginning" is available at P250 for VCD and P595 for DVD.

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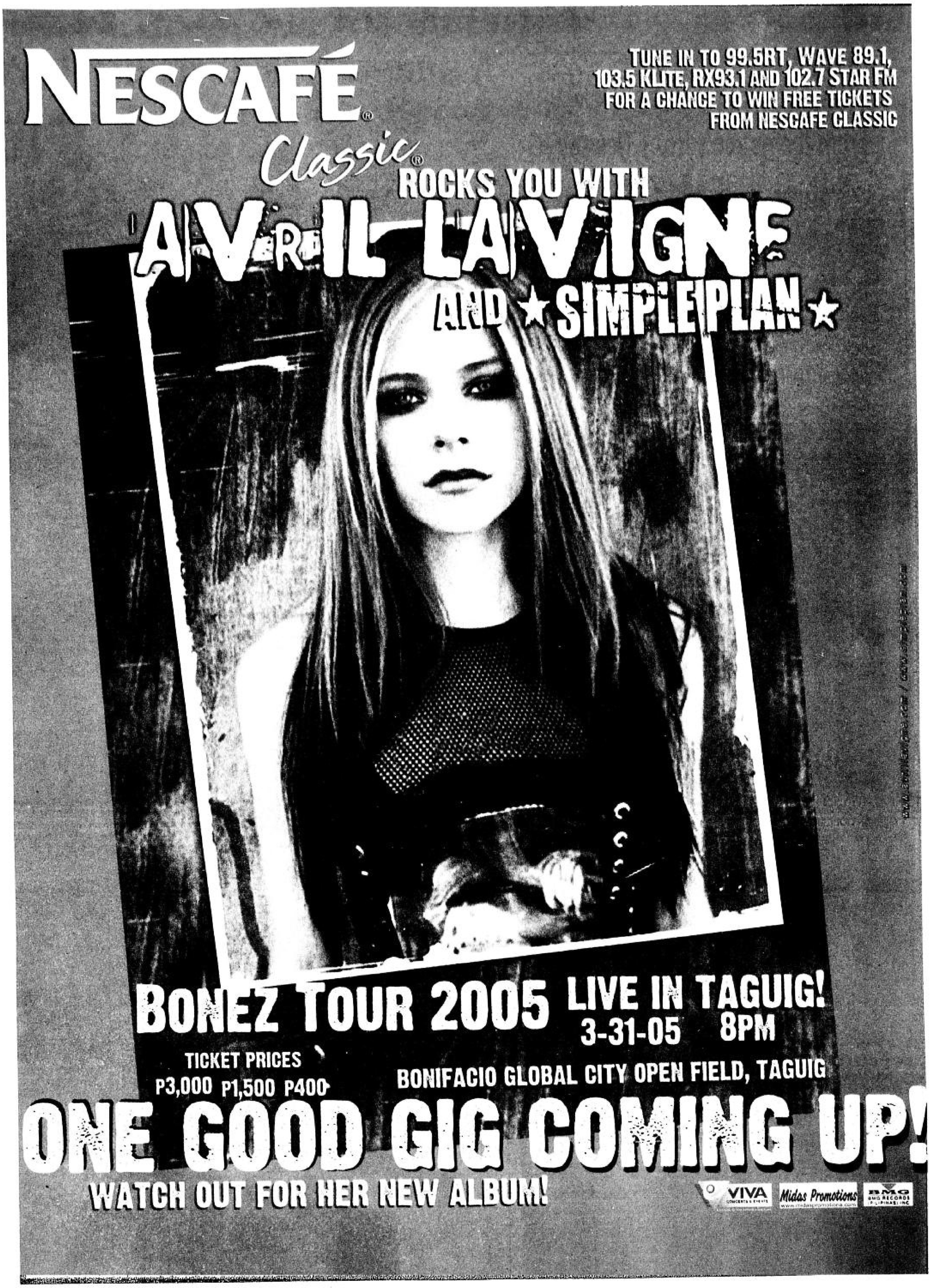

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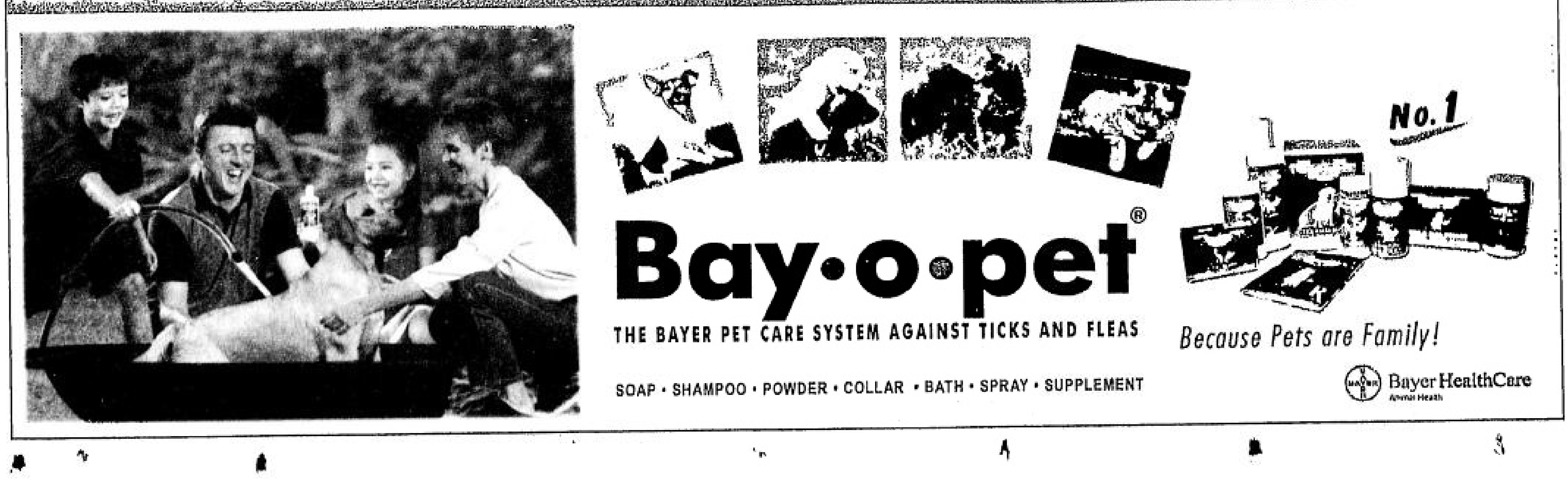

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A time-travel movie that isn't

NEW YORK—Either you're going to go with a movie about time travel, or you're not.

"The Jacket" is a movie about time travel that makes you want to go with it, based on the strength of the performances and the fact that, if you try really hard to wrap your brain around it, the premise kinda... sorta makes sense.

But "The Jacket" is a time-travel movie that isn't just a time-travel movie. It's also a romance, a mystery, a psychological drama and a paranoid thriller. (British director John Maybury samples from as many visual styles as he does genres.)

New Adrien Brody starrer is also a romance, a mystery and a paranoid thriller

Subtle

Adrien Brody's character, Gulf War veteran Jack Starks, may indeed be traveling in time to the future while undergoing experimental treatments at a mental institution. Or it may just be all in his mind.

Brody is so subtle, though, so believably tormented, he makes it possible to accept that Starks repeatedly jumps forward 15 years to the same small Vermont town he's in now, where he becomes involved with the sullen waitress Jackie (an excellent Keira Knightley). It's the kind of nuanced work you've come to expect from the Oscar-winning star of "The Pianist," and it's essential to anchoring a film that might otherwise make you roll your eyes.

Starks, a US Marine sergeant, returns home after being shot in the head in Iraq. While hitchhiking, he comes across a mother (Kelly Lynch) and her 8-year-old daughter and a young man in a station wagon (Brad Renfro) who's on his way to the Canadian border.

He gets in the car. Police pull them over. There's a shooting and Starks ends up on trial for murder. He's found not guilty by reason of insanity and placed in a state hospital. Director Maybury covers all this ground efficiently with smooth montages and overlapping imagery.

But here's where things start getting weird—and needlessly overloaded with visual gimmicks. One of the physicians, Dr. Becker (a coolly menacing Kris Kristofferson), subjects him to an unorthodox procedure in which he pumps Starks full of drugs, binds him in a full-body straight jacket and shoves him inside a corpse drawer in the hospital's morgue for hours. He inflicts this procedure several times on Starks, who finds himself flashing ahead to the future, and to Jackie, while in the drawer—and liking it.

OSCAR winner Brody fulfills expectations

Experimental

Maybury, who professes to "come from the experimental avant-garde in England," depicts Starks' claustrophobic hallucinations with an onslaught of images and tricks: dizzying zooms and pans, sped-up sequences and oversaturated colors, many of which appear in Starks' eyeballs as he squirms inside his horizontal prison.

He didn't need it all. Massy Tadjedin's script is trippy enough, and Brody and Knightley are more than compelling, both separately and together, as their characters try to figure out how Starks ended up where he is.

Knightley gives the performance of her young life; the British beauty is unrecognizable, with smudges of dark eyeliner and a mass of messy brown hair.

She utters the film's last line, and it's one that you'll find poignant or preposterous. Again, it all depends on your perspective. *AP*

'I-Witness' tackles abortion

A WOMAN who decides to have an abortion is often portrayed in local media as immoral, heartless and without a conscience.

But is this really the case?

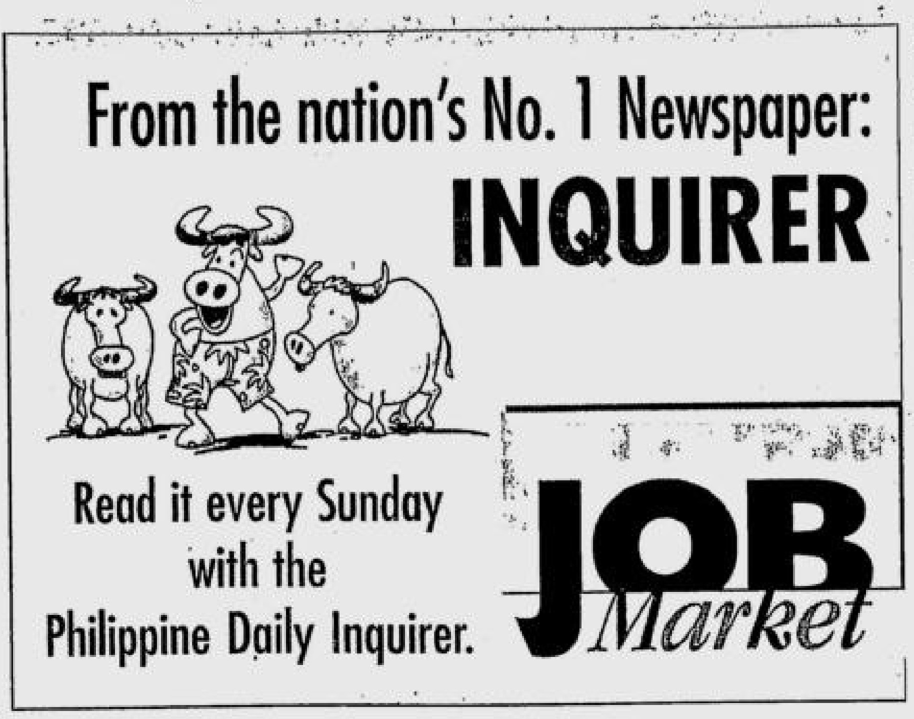
Tonight, Kara David attempts to give an answer through "Taghoy sa Sinapupunan (Cry from the Womb)," a documentary on women who have had abortions, and one who is still thinking about going through with it.

David talks to a couple who decided to do it, and then buried the fetus in their backyard.

Then she joins a woman waiting to have the procedure in a clinic, and who subsequently regrets her choice. Finally, David interviews the undecided mother-to-be.

A study reveals that most Filipinos who have abortions are married with children, and are too poor to support more. Their reckless attitude toward birth control leads to the rise of fly-by-night abortion clinics. This is also discussed in the documentary.

The program airs on GMA Channel 7, right after "Saksi."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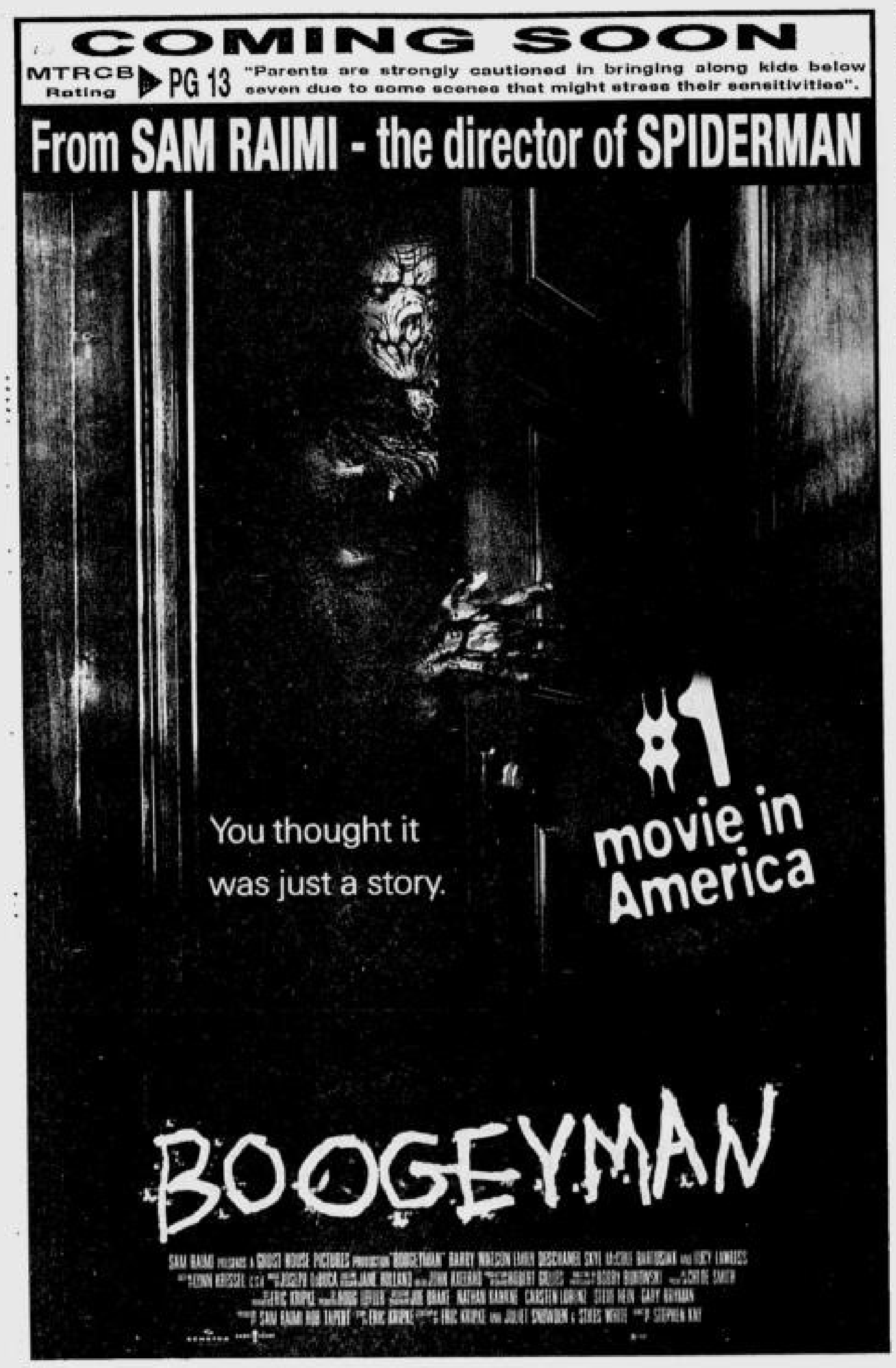
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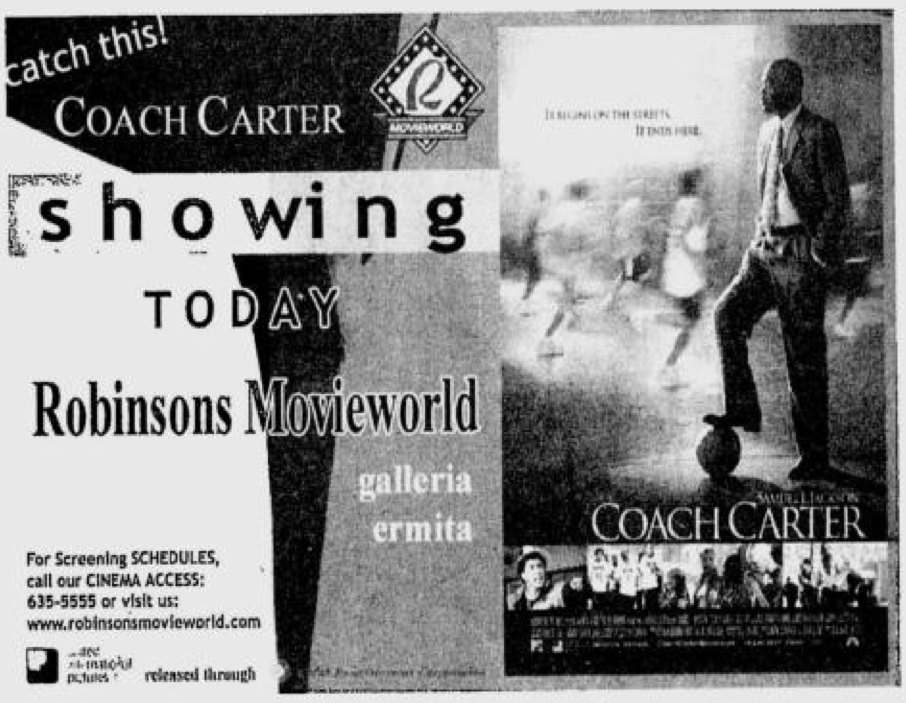
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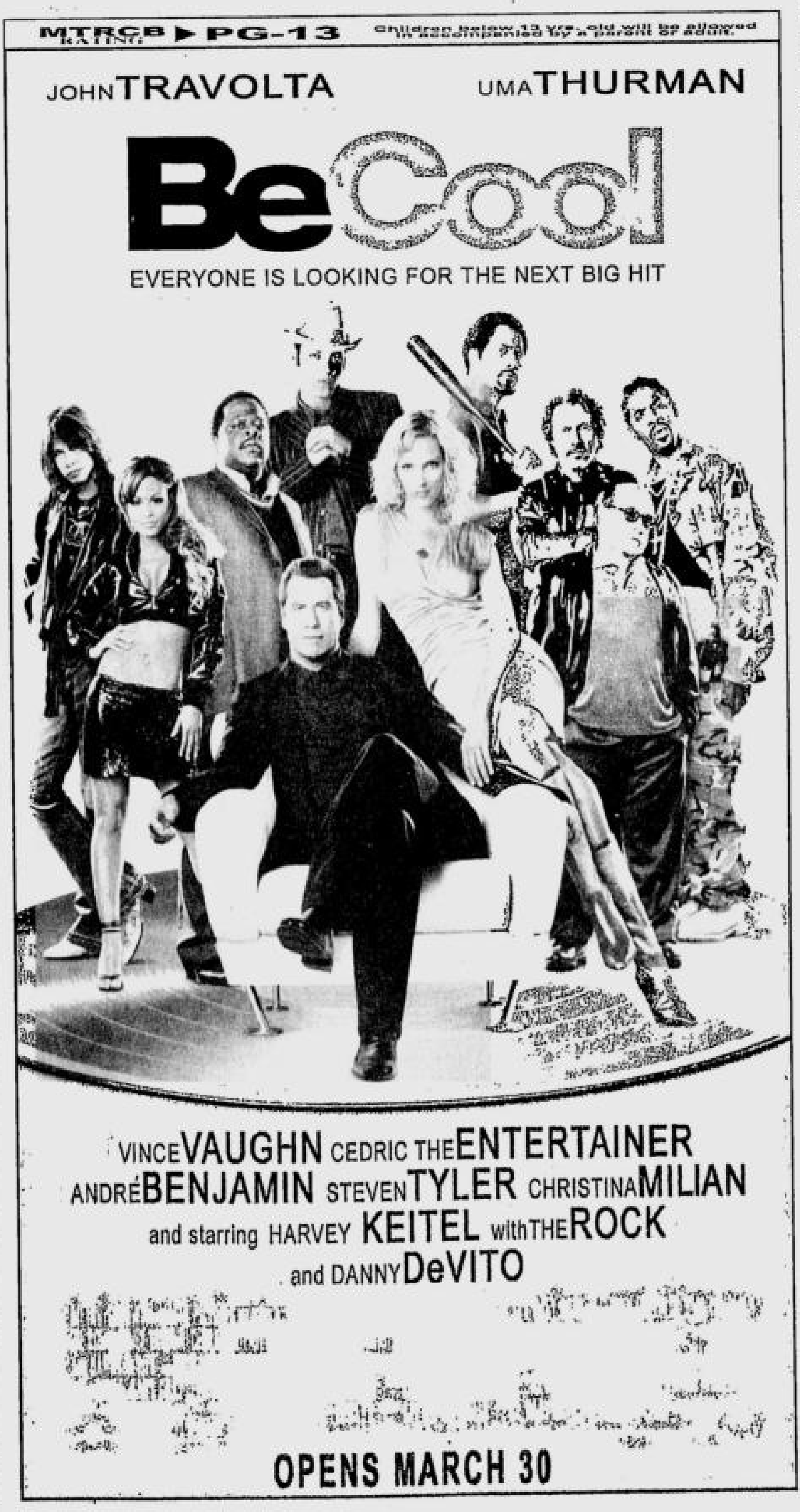
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OPENS MARCH 30

Wish *ko lang* for RP movies

By Sigfried Barros-Sanchez
Contributor

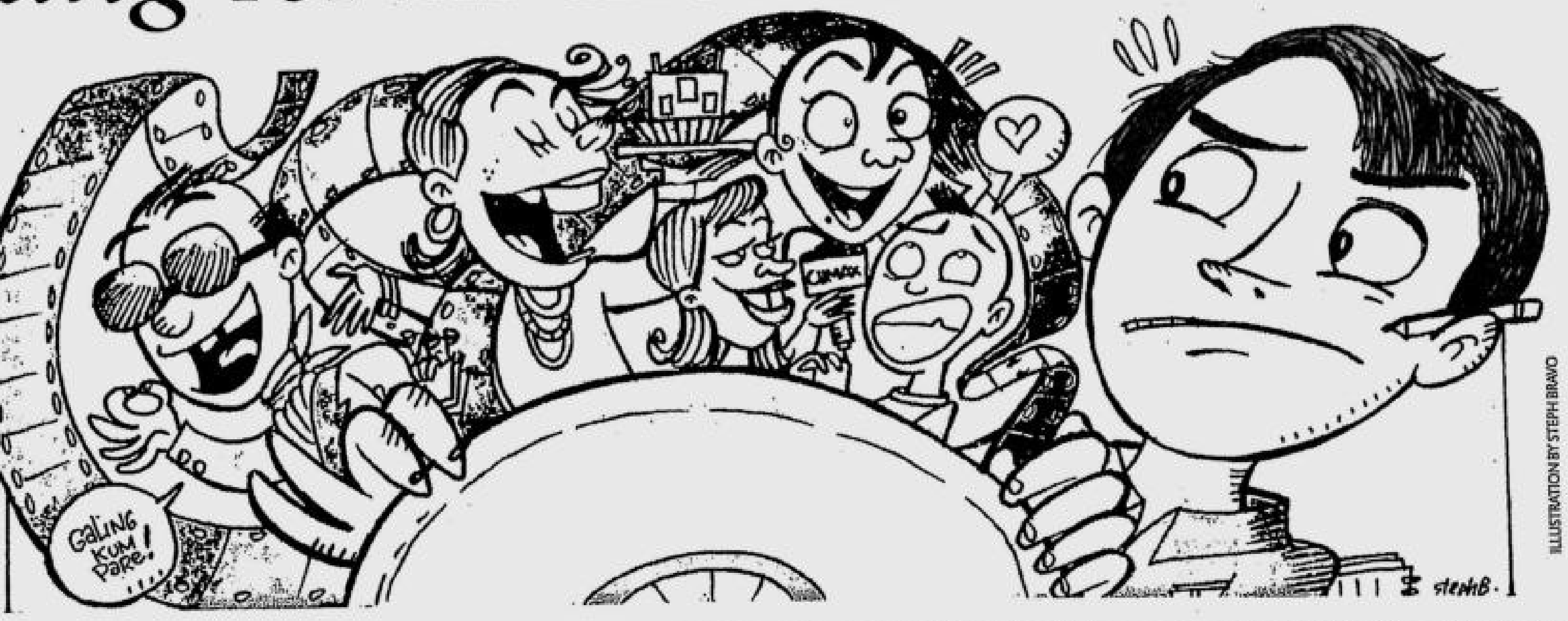

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

CHEER FACTOR

WHAT I sincerely wish I'd soon—all right, I'd settle for eventually—see in the local movie scene:

1 **New and original stories.** There has been a constant clamor for good alternative films with good alternative stories. Let's stop borrowing from Hollywood, Britain, Spain and Korea.

2 **Less intervention from the government.** We have no one else to blame for the high taxes, degradation of local film festivals and awards nights, and the influx of Hollywood movies than the government, whose own TV plugs are far from brilliant. Let's also hope it doesn't dip its fingers into the independent digital film scene once entries from Cinemalaya and Cinema One, and other such competitions, become successful.

3 **New but credible critics.** Critics were once respected, especially when there were just a few of them. Things changed when producers found film reviewers they could put on their payrolls to dish out endorsements of movies that suck. Nowadays, a filmmaker is judged not by his work but by the company he keeps. May the new critics who will emerge be more open to experimentations by courageous young directors.

4 **Less award-giving bodies.** We need new groups of young and brilliant people to give out awards. And those awards ceremonies! We are sick and tired of production numbers that feature the latest young contract artists of networks but have no relevance to the occasion. Enough lip-synching. Enough sexy dances that merely showcase influential managers' wards. Also, can't we find really good hosts for these programs? I just know there's someone out there. Throw in good writers who will write good spiels. We can even have a very quiet but memorable ceremony like the Bafta (British awards).

5 **Really credible nominations.** For example, nominees for Best Production Design should have presented sheet upon sheet of their set designs, plus the sketches of their costumes. If no one can submit this requirement, don't nominate anybody. Ever notice why there are no nominations for Art Direction or Costume Design in these parts? Ever wonder why production designers and production managers can afford expensive cars and the scriptwriters go hungry? Ever wonder why no Hollywood producer wants to shoot here anymore? But we digress.

6 **Enough racketeers.** For this industry to flourish again, let us separate the good tomatoes from the rotten ones. Yes, it's a tough job, like creating a new industry altogether. But that's okay. Young filmmakers have little to thank prevailing customs for. Many indie filmmakers have emerged since Kidlat Tahimik because thay are tired of conforming to the norm. Let the old industry die. Cinema lives.

7 **Publications that will give new filmmakers time and space.** The only reason that old formulas are still being used in making and promoting movies is that there will always be writers willing to play the game. Actor is smitten by Actress during the shoot. C'mon. *Panahon pa 'yan ni* Limahong! Gossip sells, but independently produced films deserve equal media mileage. Talented indie filmmakers like Rico Ilarde, Khavn dela Cruz, Lav Diaz, Ellen Ongkiko-Marfil, Jon Red, Ato Bautista, Ditsi Carolino, and Erwin Romulo all get so little notice, good or bad. We bet they'd settle for the space otherwise alloted for Mystika, Madame Auring, Angelika Jones or Mahal.

8 **New musical scorers.** Those who can really match a movie with good and accurate music. Scorers must really research their stuff. do they even know about underground bands that came out in the '80s, like Dean's December, Urban Bandits, Violent Playground, Identity Crisis, Ethnic Faces; and in the '90s, like Tame The Tikbalang, Bad Omen, Biofeedback, Mindrape Sonnet 58, Half Life Half Death... But again, we digress.

9 **Very passionate producers who deserve to work with passionate filmmakers.** "Minsan Pa," directed by Jeffrey Jeturian, was last year's biggest gamble. It turned out to be a critical success. Congratulations to MLR Films.

10 **Digital filmmakers who will get the chance to tell their stories using the 35mm format.** Film is not the enemy; it will never be. The enemy is the system that makes a storyteller turn to digital filmmaking, just to be heard. New taxes, old norms, the star system, shitty festival selections, producers who act like gods, "envelopmental" journalism, unsupportive government—these are the enemies. Nothing gives a filmmaker more fulfillment than shooting in 35mm.

11 **Young, cerebral actors willing to go the indie route.** There's a joke in the local indie circle: When in doubt, cast Ronnie Lazaro, Joel Torre, John Arcilla, Pen Medina, Archie Adamos, Dido dela Paz, Lui Manansala, or Nonie Buencamino. Not only are they very good actors; they are also willing to experiment for a fee that's very, very indie, indeed. Sadly, most of them are 40 and older. There are very few young ones willing to try something different. Among them are Jeffrey Quizon, Yul Servo, China Cojuangco and Julia Clarete. However, it should be noted that the indie scene has produced good actors such as Tado, Soliman Cruz, Raul Morit (24 years acting in indie films!), Roence Cruz, Shamaine Centenera, Mario Magallona and, lately, Hector Macaso. We have not produced our own Gael Garcia Bernal, although it's a sure thing that there's someone out there.

12 **New genres to experiment on.** Filmmaking should not always be the old drama, action, horror, comedy, and/or sex. It's not that Filipinos don't like to think. Even a sex film could be very intelligent. No, really.

(The author S.B. Sanchez, 29, is a screenwriter, independent film actor and independent filmmaker. "Lasponggols," his entry to the Cinemalaya festival in July, is a black comedy about the ills of the local mainstream cinema.)

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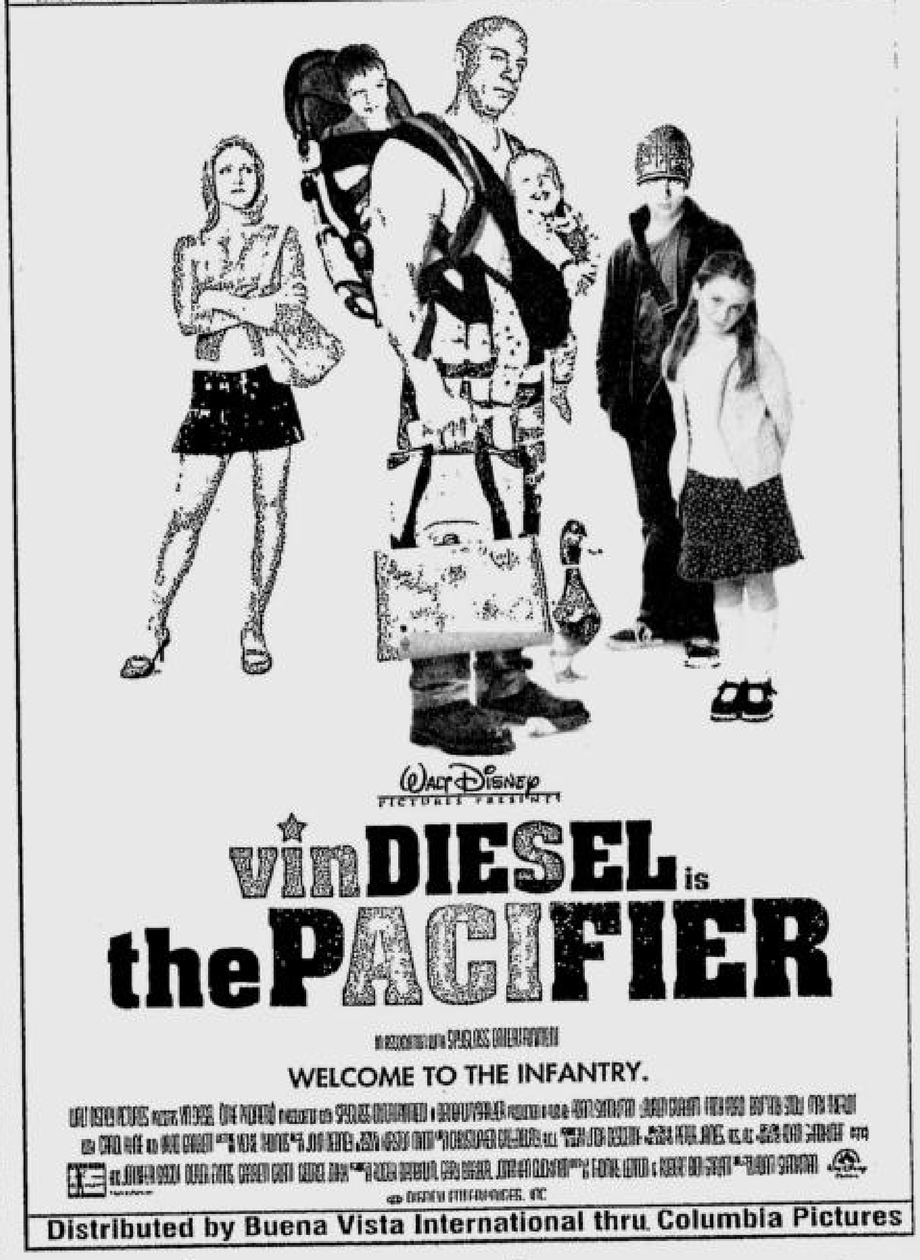

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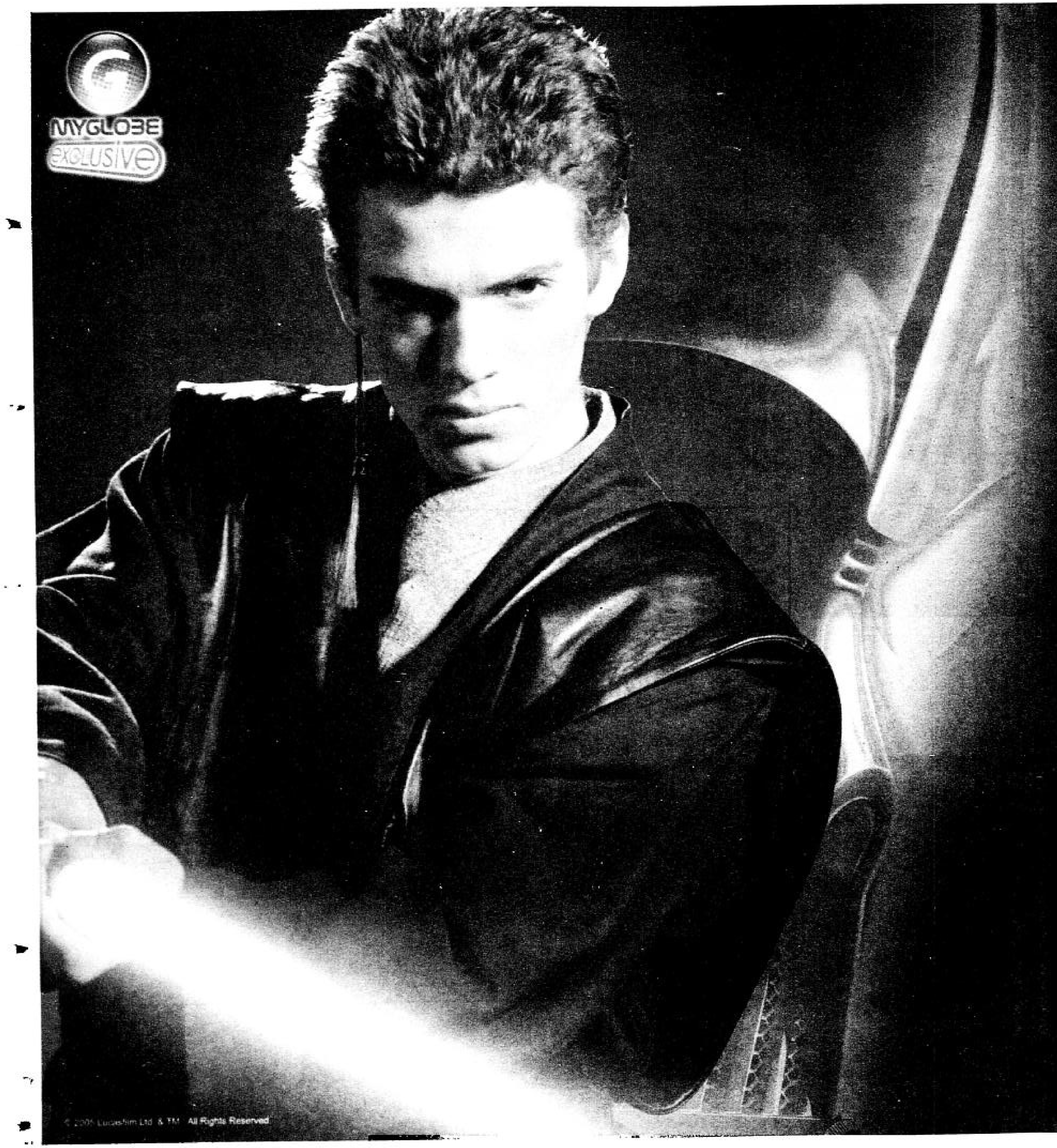

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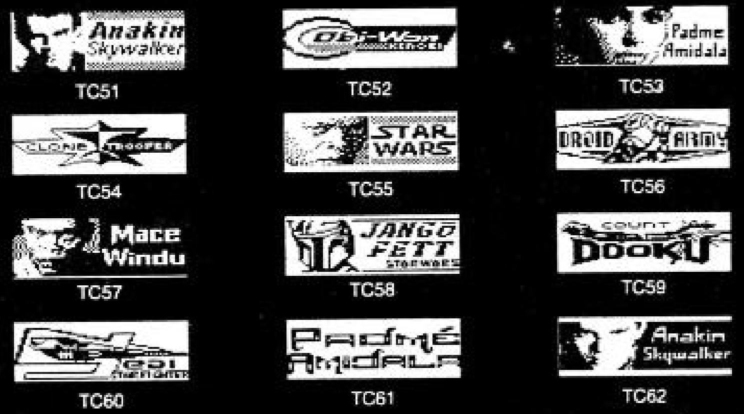
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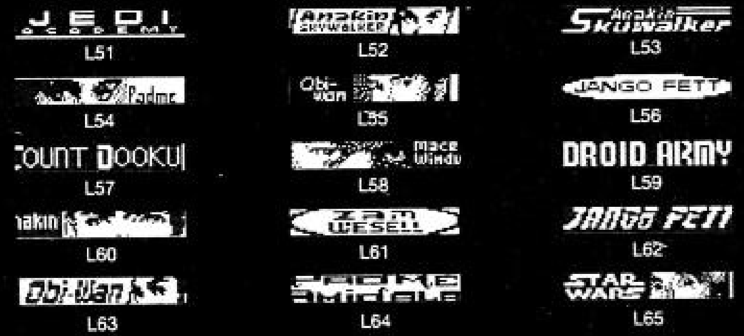
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₱15-B coal-fed power plant to rise in Cebu

By Ronnel W. Domingo

KOREAN-FILIPINO firm Kepco Cebu Corp. (Kececo) has committed to invest P15 billion in a 200-megawatt, coal-fired power plant in Naga, Cebu, Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos announced last week.

Kececo is a 60-40 partnership between the local unit of Korea Electric Power Co. (Kepco Philippines) and Salcon Power Corp., which holds a contract to rehabilitate, operate, maintain and manage National Power Corp.'s Naga power plant complex.

Santos said the new project offered a timely solution to address the need for more power-generating capacity in the Visayas grid, which covers the islands of Cebu, Bohol, Negros, Panay, Leyte and Samar.

Government documents showed that the peak electricity demand for the region is expected to grow from 1,060 MW in 2004 to 1,308 MW in 2008 and to 1,742 MW in 2013—an average yearly growth rate of 5.7 percent.

Santos said the Board of Investments approved the granting of incentives to the project covered by "bilateral agreements" as listed in the 2004 Investment Priorities Plan.

The project was given pioneer status as it would use the circulating fluidized bed combustion (CFBC) technology, which is still untried in the country, as well as its substantial use of domestic coal as fuel.

CFBC technology is touted as a "clean coal technology" as it is said to reduce the emissions of nitrogen oxides and sulfur oxides to levels below standard emission limits.

The plant would be using coal from Semirara Island and Cebu, and import additional supply from Indonesia "only if necessary."

Santos explained that the project was a result of a bilateral agreement between the governments of the Philippines and South Korea that was signed in Cebu City in June 9, 2004.

The Department of Energy and Seoul's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy are implementing the agreement, which is an offshoot of President Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to South Korea in June 2003.

The pact aims at fostering cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy; promoting the development and adoption of clean coal technology that meets the requirements of environment-friendly power generation and assisting in addressing the projected power shortage in Cebu.

The first 100-MW unit is expected to start operating in December 2008 while the second would run in March 2009.

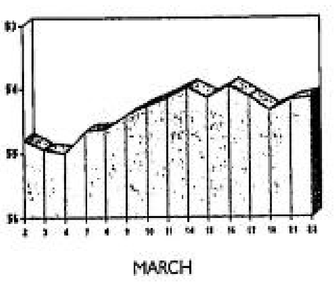
A projected total annual production of about 1,185 gigawatt-hours would be generated at a cost of P3.92 per kilowatt-hour, which would be directly sold to the Visayas Electric Co. and other nearby electric cooperatives.

At full capacity, the plant can employ 520 workers.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



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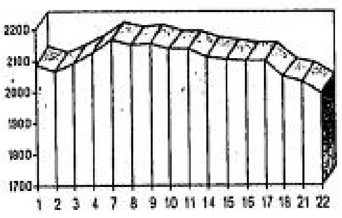
STOCK MARKET

Cautious trading seen

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



STOCK analysts expect investors to remain cautious this week as they await the passage of crucial tax reform measures by Congress and direction of local monetary policy after a quarter-percentage-point rise in US interest rates.

An increase in US interest normally attracts foreign investors to place their money in US securities.

"Investors might adopt a wait-and-see stance following the long Lenten break, beginning with global fund managers' response to the US Fed's latest move on the widely followed interest rates and progression within the volatile crude market," said Grace Cerdenia, chief operating officer at 2TradeAsia.com.

BPI Trade also said in a weekly report that the lack of new positive developments were likely to keep investors on the sidelines.

Aside from closely watching the Congress' special session this week to pass the value-added tax bill, the rise in world oil prices was another concern since this could weigh on consumer sentiment.

"However, we may see some position-taking in the coming weeks as investors start to speculate on the first-quarter performances of select companies. Also, some funds which were locked-in during the IPOs of Manila Water Co. and SM Investments Corp. may be switched to other issues. Investors may start looking for bargains as prices have gone down," BPI Trade said.

It added that the market's current weakness was a healthy correction.

"The consolidation provides investors an opportunity to enter the market," BPI Trade added.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

RP wind farm starts operating next month

By Abigail L. Ho

THE FIRST wind farm in Southeast Asia, located in Bangui Bay in Ilocos Norte, is set to be commissioned by April 30 following the establishment of the first of the 15 wind turbines that will compose the entire wind farm.

The first 70-meter, 1.6-megawatt (MW) wind turbine was erected two weeks ago, paving the way for the establishment of the remaining 14 turbines.

It took three days to raise the first wind turbine. The remaining 14 turbines could each be erected in 12 hours, during winds of less than 8 meters per second, internal estimates showed.

Starting May, the 25-MW wind farm will already provide electricity to customers of the Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative (Inec).

The first wind farm in the country and in Southeast Asia is a project of Filipino-Danish consortium Northwind Power Development Corp.

Constructing the wind farm on a turnkey

RP/ B2

AUSTRALIAN MINING EXEC IN RP
President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo receives Climax Mining Ltd. chair James Askew and Climax Philippines chair Jose P. Leviste Jr. (left) for a briefing on the scheduled development of the publicly listed Australian company's gold and copper project in the Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya provinces. Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Michael T. Defensor and Chamber of Mines president Philip G. Romualdez also attended the briefing for the President.

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RP seen remaining under IMF watch

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund sees the Philippines remaining under its intense surveillance "for quite sometime" to boost the government's fiscal adjustment efforts toward the much-desired "virtuous" economic cycle.

In a recent press briefing after the release of the Fund's latest country report, IMF country representative Vikram Haksar said the current post-program monitoring (PPM) would end at some point in time but was extended for now as the local authorities themselves recognized the need for it.

"It's something which is usually discussed between (local) authorities and the Fund and authorities so far indicate that they find it useful to actually have this vehicle for more enhanced and closer dialogues so I'd argue that our discussions with the Philippine authorities will continue to remain for quite sometime and quite intense in the future as well," Haksar said.

Bicol Rep. Jose Salceda, chair of the House committee on economic affairs, earlier called for the termination of the PPM now so that Malacañang could gain more public support on its tax reform programs. He argued the government could be more effective in determining its own fiscal course and needed no IMF prescription.

But Haksar said the PPM would continue for now, even as the Philippines had risen past the threshold at which the monitoring arrangement was theoretically not needed anymore.

The Philippines is now a net depositor to the IMF instead of a net creditor, which means its outstanding debts to the Fund had now fallen below the country's quota contribution as a shareholder.

"We have a very extensive program of assistance out here which is a very good and useful way by which we can constructively support what the authorities are trying to do, whether it's in the financial sector or government financial statistics," Haksar said.

"The PPM is a surveillance relationship. We come out here and try to do quality analysis and give you our advice. The advice is peppered with very best intentions in a completely bona fide fashion," he said.

He noted that the PPM simply meant that instead of sending a mission to the country to do a report every year as was the usual practice of Article IV consultations with any other member country, the IMF would do the same twice a year.

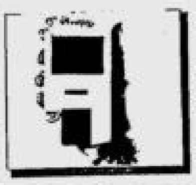
"The authorities find it useful and we're happy to have this vehicle so we're continuing for now," Haksar said, noting the government's current fiscal constraints.

He added that the front-loading of fiscal adjustments advocated by the IMF, for instance, was needed to reduce the country's vulnerabilities to external shocks and improve investor confidence toward a virtuous cycle.

"A virtuous cycle is when you have a strong upfront adjustment. That is being done in many emerging markets where there are concerns on deficit and debt levels and markets tend to respond quite well," Haksar said.

"The virtuous cycle idea is as you get policy action early on, interest rates fall, growth picks up which automatically supports further reduction of deficit and debt to GDP (gross domestic product) ratio, further strengthening of market confidence and a further reduction of interest rates lowers the cost of funding for everyone in the economy," he explained.

The Philippines has had 20 different financing programs with the Fund.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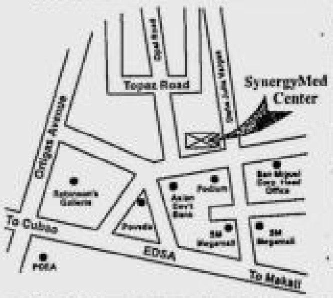

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WTO and farm trade

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

WITH the make-or-break WTO Ministerial Conference coming up in Hong Kong toward the end of the year, and in the aftermath of the collapse of the last talks in Cancun, Mexico, two years ago, developing countries like the Philippines ought to be doing their homework well before the December meeting itself. Agriculture will again be the major flash point, with substantial reduction of the rich countries' massive subsidies to their farm sectors being the objective of developing countries in the negotiations. The widely held view is that farmers in poor countries ultimately get penalized by these rich country subsidies that result in artificially low farm product prices, which unfairly edge out third world farmers not just from the international markets, but within their own domestic markets as well.

Worse off without WTO

Those of us who applauded the collapse in Cancun celebrated the newfound negotiating strength of smaller and poorer countries who demonstrated that by taking a solid unified stand, they could stand up to the bullying of the large rich countries and prevent them from pushing a lopsided agenda. But the collapse in Cancun was merely a second-best outcome; it was never the real objective. The developing countries are clearly not out to push WTO out of existence. Every country, whether rich or poor, needs the organized multilateral trading system that the WTO represents. The reason WTO was born, initially in the form of decades of negotiation rounds under the General Agreement in Tariffs and Trade (GATT), was that there was always a felt need for it. Poor and small countries need it precisely to find greater strength in numbers as they negotiate for fair trading relationships with big powerful countries. Without it, the alternative would be a free-for-all where small economies are forced into lopsided bilateral negotiations with large economic powers, with predictable results—sort of like pitting Manny Pacquiao against Mike Tyson.

But even the rich, powerful countries need something like the WTO to enforce discipline and ensure adherence to agreed commitments, which bilateral deals will not necessarily guarantee. Otherwise, they may find bilateral agreements, whether with other powerful partners or with much smaller ones, being routinely violated by their trading partners without fear of sanctions or penalties from anyone. In short, everyone is likely to be worse off without WTO, even though under current circumstances, not everyone is necessarily better off with it. The challenge lies in ensuring that everyone can be better off under WTO.

Farm trade trends

The situation is complicated by the fact that world trade in farm products has undergone dramatic changes in the past decade or so. In the mid-1990s, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had projected that developing countries would turn from being net agricultural exporters to being net agricultural importers in the foreseeable future. If one looks at food commodities alone (i.e. excluding non-food farm products), developing countries have already become net importers, whereas they were mostly net exporters of these products since the 1970s.

This switch had already happened in the Philippines in the mid '90s. Many of us would remember how coconut products and sugar used to be our top exports up to about the early '80s. Now they are merely in the top 10, with electronic components and garments making up 75 percent of our export earnings. We began to import large amounts of rice in the mid-1990s, especially when the El Niño started becoming a regular occurrence. At the same time, sugar ceased to be a major export as decades of very high protection kept it a high-cost and uncompetitive industry propped up by the artificially high prices paid by the Americans through the US Sugar Quota. With that preferential access to the US gone, our expensive sugar cannot compete in the regular export markets. Even coconut has been undergoing a slow decline through the years, for lack of a coherent strategy to keep it a top earner for us and for thousands of rural dwellers around the country. Bananas and pineapple have been mainstays since the 1980s, but due to protectionist barriers in major markets, our exports of these fruits are not enough to give us net exporter status for farm products as a whole.

Diet patterns

Meanwhile, East Asians have become less of grain eaters and more of bread and meat eaters, a change in dietary patterns that normally comes with increasing incomes. The result has been declining per capita consumption of rice, and rising per capita consumption of wheat and grains used to feed livestock—the kind of grains that the rich countries export to us. Also, we are consuming and importing much more meat and dairy products, farm products mostly sold to us by rich industrialized countries. All these have contributed to a seemingly anomalous situation where developing countries with large farm sectors are actually buying their food from rich industrialized countries, who export to them cereals, meat and dairy products. In other words, poor countries are net importers of farm products from rich countries, who are in turn net exporters of farm products to poor countries. But this seeming anomaly need not be surprising. First, the rich countries usually have a much higher land-labor ratio than third world countries, who tend to have high population densities. Thus, there is basis for the rich countries to have some comparative advantage in farm products. Second, the rich countries have been heavily subsidizing their small farm sectors, making their farm product exports artificially cheap.

There is hope, however. There are clear indications that both rich and developing countries alike are dramatically increasing their consumption of horticultural products, i.e. tropical fruits, vegetables, nuts and beverages (coffee and tea)—what we are now calling "high value crops." These are products we developing countries are better positioned to export, and which rich countries don't have direct domestic competitors to protect and subsidize. The challenge is to stop the rich countries from using all sorts of excuses to block our sales of these products to them. This should tell us what kind of homework we ought to be doing to get the most benefits out of WTO in future negotiation rounds. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

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RP ...

From page B1

basis is Danish wind turbine manufacturer Vestas Wind Systems A/S.

Financing for the $44-million project came from a mixture of soft loans and grants from Danish development bank Danida.

The project cost covers not only the actual construction of the wind turbines, but also the rehabilitation of a 57-kilometer long transmission line linking the wind farm to Inec's substation in Laoag City.

Apart from the Northwind project, several wind farm projects are now in various stages of development.

The state-run Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. will start constructing a 40-MW wind farm in Burgos, Ilocos Norte, later this year.

Smith Bell Resco will also be setting up a 30-MW wind farm in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

Environmental group Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), together with some partners from the private sector, are likewise developing two wind farms in Northern Panay.

NTC pushes 6-second billing scheme

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission is requesting the Office of the Solicitor General to help resolve a five-year-old legal impasse on a policy that would require mobile phone companies to bill customers on a six-second pulse cycle.

An NTC circular issued in 2000 directed phone companies to bill by the six-second pulse instead of rounding off charges to the higher minute. But the major players obtained an injunction from the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

The circular also ordered the telecom firms to register the SIM cards of prepaid customers to help regulate the industry by preventing text scams and discouraging phone theft. The billing circular never got implemented.

"We have asked the OSG to help us expedite and find a favorable resolution to this billing circular. It would be to the interest of the consumers," NTC chair Ronald Solis said.

Solis said the regulator would immediately implement the billing circular once the court lifts the restraining order.

The TRO issued by the Quezon City court was questioned by the NTC before the Court of Appeals. It was brought to the Supreme Court, which remanded the case to the Quezon City court in 2003.

A small telecom player believed that the injunction issued by the Quezon City court had lapsed and that the circular should already be in effect.

But Rogelio Quevedo, head of legal of Smart Communications Inc., said that the restraining order remained in effect. Even Solis agrees.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano said the billing circular should be resolved immediately.

"It has been 4 years since that injunction. There should be moves to lift that because the billing circular would be good for consumers," Albano said.

The shift to a six-second pulse scheme would make it cheaper for consumers to make calls. The billing measure was originally meant to address a pervasive problem with drop calls starting in the late 1990s.

Mobile companies said they have solved the problem with drop calls or those that were prematurely terminated by the network but were still charged to subscribers.

Albano said the major players should refund consumers or at least pay more taxes to the government out of the billions in pesos they were making from network inefficiency.

He claimed that phone giants that have been earning billions each year must be ordered to pay back consumers or at least the government the amount they had overcharged in the past due to their poor network service.

Albano said he would initiate moves in Congress to revive plans of the NTC to revise the billing structure of telephone companies.

Rep. Danilo Suarez, vice chair of the House ways and means committee, earlier estimated

NTC/ B4

$100-M hospital project hits a snag

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A PLAN of Japan's biggest health-care provider to put up a $100-million medical service complex in the country bogged down as the firm's chosen site at the Manila Bay reclamation area was off limits to foreigners, a government official said.

Teodorico C. Taguinod, general manager and chief executive of the Philippine Reclamation Authority (formerly Public Estates Authority), said in an interview that Tokyo-based Tokushukai Medical Corp. wanted to build a hospital and school in the area.

"Tokushukai officials were very keen on getting hold of five hectares of PRA property, but it needs to be reclassified as a private land or the project must be done through a joint venture [with a local partner]," Taguinod said.

But Tokushukai, operator of Japan's largest chain of hospitals, was not interested in a joint venture, he added.

Taguinod said the company's plan was to build a 1,000-bed hospital as its main facility here, with complementary units such as a nursing school and a retirement facility.

The planned project would involve Tokushukai's biggest hospital as its 47 hospitals in Japan have between 190 beds and 600 beds only.

Last month, then Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said Tokushukai had set the start of construction work for the project on April 15.

Purisima said the realization of the project could pave the way for medical economic zones to flourish in the country, which would help promote it as a preferred destination of outsourced medical services.

He said it would be good for the country to develop the medical and retirement services sector considering the rapid aging of populations in developed countries, which put pressure on the cost of health services there.

Tokushukai sent a team to the country late last year after it signed with the Department of Trade and Industry in October a memorandum of understanding on the proposed project.

Under the agreement, the hospital would be called Benigno Aquino Memorial Hospital and would make quality medical care available to local and foreign patients, particularly Japanese expatriates and retirees staying in

$100-M HOSPITAL/ B4

ING Bank says 2005 pivotal year for RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THIS year could be a pivotal year for the Philippines, which is seen passing enough tax measures soon to avoid a sovereign credit-rating downgrade by London-based Fitch Ratings, according to ING Bank.

The Dutch bank's analysts, Tim Condon and Prakash Sakpal, in a commentary for March, said: "We believe 2005 could be a breakthrough year for the Philippines when growth breaks out on the upside and fiscal woes begin to diminish."

Despite Moody's Investor Service's surprise two-notch sovereign downgrade in February, ING Bank said Republic of the Philippines (ROP) bonds continued to be the most attractive among Asian sovereigns.

"Assuming the entire adjustment must occur via new fiscal measures, the government would need to produce very close to the P80 billion in fiscal measures sought by President Arroyo," the report said.

"It is all coming down to the VAT [value-added tax]," it stressed.

The ING Bank commentary noted that the Lower House had passed a two-point increase in the VAT rate to 12 percent that would raise an estimated P35.1 billion in additional revenue and likewise approved the lifting of exemptions that could produce another P17.7 billion.

It added that the Senate was considering alternative VAT reforms that would likely get within striking distance of the House version.

"President Arroyo had put her political weight behind VAT reform. At this point, we consider the odds that the government comes up with enough to satisfy Fitch and stave off a downgrade greater than 50:50," the report said.

The bank added that Fitch's negative outlook on its "BB" rating was the remaining rating action overhang on the market.

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BCII shifts from cement, steel to service-based businesses

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE Investment-Management Inc. (Phinma) Group is reengineering its flagship firm, Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc. (BCII), into a service-oriented company.

Phinma president Ramon del Rosario Jr. told the INQUIRER that BCII was acquiring new universities in the coming years, particularly in Cagayan de Oro and Iloilo, in a bid to create a network of 85 colleges and universities in the future.

"What we are trying to do is to make high quality education available outside of Metro Manila. We hope to have a network of 85 colleges and universities with a total population of 50,000-75,000 students over time," he said.

Del Rosario said the network of universities would be affordable. Its system, he said, would be focused on information technology, English proficiency and skills that will make the students employable over a short period of time.

BCII has ventured into the education sector after it acquired the controlling interest in Araullo University Inc., a university in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

AU, which has 6,000 students, had undergone a P64-million upgrade.

BCII also plans to expand into affordable housing and medical services.

"We've radically changed our business philosophy. Whereas before we were very much into heavy industries and manufacturing, now we have shifted to the services sector. We are looking at the basic things that make a difference in the lives of Filipinos," he said.

Aside from educational services, the Phinma group has interests in steel, power generation and oil exploration, low cost housing development and financial services.

Phinma, through BCII, recently sold its entire cement business to Cemco Holdings, a subsidiary of Switzerland's Holcim Ltd., saying it could no longer stay competitive in the cement industry.

BCII and unit Atlas Cement Corp. sold their combined 51-percent stake in Union Cement Holdings, a major shareholder of Union Cement.

The acquisition by Cemco was made through two firms, by buying the 21.3 percent held by BCII in UCHC and the acquisition of 29.69 percent of Atlas Cement Corp. in UCHC. The deal was valued at $214 million consisting of $89 million for the direct holdings of BCII and $125 million for Atlas' shareholdings.

"Unfortunately, it is very difficult for the Philippines to compete globally because of factors of production, energy costs, financing costs, and even the wage scale are high relatively to our neighboring countries, in particular, Thailand and Vietnam," Del Rosario said.

BAP to cut stake in fixed income exchange to 20%

THE BANKERS Association of the Philippines (BAP), the umbrella organization of commercial banks in the country, is looking at selling a portion of its more than 30-percent stake in Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp. (PDEX), the country's first fixed income exchange.

BAP president Cesar Virata told the INQUIRER that the organization was willing to reduce its stake to 20 percent so that other interested parties could buy interest in the exchange.

Virata said BAP would have to reduce its stake to 20 percent in line with the requirements of the Securities and Regulation Code if it wanted PDEX to become a self-regulatory organization.

Virata said the group was in talks with one of the technology firms that might be interested in buying a portion of the BAP stake.

PDEX, which will be launched today, has a paid-up capital of P450 million, and is controlled by the BAP. Other shareholders are the Philippine Stock Exchange with 12.22 percent, while Tata Consulting and Computershare have 10 percent each. Other shareholders are San Miguel Corp. (5 percent), Philam Life (5 percent), Investment Houses Association of the Philippines (2.5 percent) and the Social Security System (2 percent). *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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Honesto C. General

THE PHILIPPINES was rebuilt from the devastation of World War II with cheap loans from the Rehabilitation Finance Corp. (RFC), now the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP). You could borrow at 4 percent per year fixed for 20 years. You did not want to miss any payment because if you did, you got slapped with a 50-percent surcharge, bringing your interest rate to a horrendous 6 percent.

Construction costs were so low that you could put up a modest house for P20,000, and a unit in an accessoria could be built for P10,000.

As a result, homes, accessorias, cinema houses, commercial buildings sprang up like mushrooms all over the country. To meet the need for fire coverage, insurance companies opened up in just about every corner in downtown Manila.

That era of cheap loans lasted for about 15 years. By the time I built my house in 1960, the home loan program at the Ayala Group was at 6 percent per annum fixed for 20 years. When I picked up my optional retirement to open my own insurance agency, I had to transfer the loan to the SSS where the interest rate was at 9 percent per year.

Today, home loans at 9 percent per year fixed for 25 years are available only at the low-cost housing program of the government. This was the flagship project of the Ramos presidency. The plan was to build 1,200,000 units at P250,000 per unit over the six years. But the government did not have the money to build such a grandiose scheme. So, Pag-Ibig, the GSIS and the SSS were tapped to put up the money.

Four years into the plan, the program was in shambles. Homebuyers were not paying their loans. They claimed the units were poorly constructed; within months, the walls were cracking, the roof was leaking and the plumbing was clogged.

Now, the SSS is buckling under P30 billion of hopelessly overdue loans. Pag-Ibig and the GSIS are surely suffering from their share of bad debts.

Today, when you want to build a house beyond the low-cost housing type, the interest rates at private banks are close to usurious. On a ten-year home loan, my son Louie pays 12 percent interest fixed for one year. Let me repeat that, one year. He is ecstatic because the rate used to fluctuate every three months. The annual anniversary is next month and the bank has agreed to bring down the rate to 11.5 percent. Thank God for little favors.

Contrast this with the home loan my son Gerry took out recently in Los Angeles. The rate is 5.625 percent fixed for 30 years.

In his e-mail letter to me, Gerry said, "There are many kinds of home loans, you can knock yourself out. One can even get a quote from a lender in the east coast or wherever, and deals can be done through the phone, fax or e-mail. It's so highly competitive that it's crazy."

Gerry hit the nail in the head. There is little or no competition here for home loans. You cannot find a lender outside Makati. And the Makati lenders are closely knit. Hence the atmospheric interest rates.

And once you take out a loan, you are stuck. You cannot move to another bank because of the penalties, even if you want to transfer the loan at the annual anniversary date.

Now, no less than the IMF is pushing the Bangko Sentral to raise interest rate to curb inflation.

But the Philippines has already the highest interest rates in Asia. In fact, we are the only place where interest rates are in double figures. There has got to be other ways for fighting inflation.

The Bangko Sentral should learn from the Insurance Commission. Eleven years ago, the fire insurance industry was completely liberalized. First, foreign companies were allowed to come in through three doors. They could buy into an existing Filipino company, set up a full-fledged branch, or open a wholly-owned subsidiary. Second, the Commission disbanded the fire insurance cartel that dictated the price of fire insurance for decades.

Today, fire insurance rates are, on the average, one-fifth what it used to be. But premium volume is at a level never reached before. Business is booming as more and more Filipinos are buying fire insurance for the first time in their lives.

If interest rates on home loans are brought down to single digits, we will see a boom never seen here in the past fifty years. And the banks will make more money than ever before. And there will be fewer non-performing loans.

But the first step is for Bangko Sentral to break up the banking cartel.

NTC pushes 6-second . . .

From page B3

that mobile phone operators make between P7 billion and P10 billion each year out of drop calls.

Suarez authored a bill calling for the imposition of a franchise tax on telecom firms for the use of the airwaves and also for poor service.

Suarez said telecom firms must adopt the six-second billing cycle or to start billing a call only after the first minute to ensure that subscribers were not paying more than what they should for a call that may be cut within a one-minute billing period.

Smart and Globe officials claimed they now offer seamless connection and that their system could now distinguish between a network drop and those deliberately terminated by subscribers.

Globe has almost 4,000 cellular sites nationwide while Smart has about 5,000 all over the country. Third player Sun Cellular has about 1,300 cellular sites and said it would expand its network to about 2,000 this year so it could accommodate six million customers.

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As of March 23, 2005

CLUB	SELLING	BUYING
Alabang Country Club "B"		1.050M
Baguio Country Club	850K	500K
Camp John Hay	110K	
Canlubang Golf Club	please call	450K
Canyon Woods	130K	-
Capitol Hills "A"	100K	please call
Celebrity Sports Club	110K	100K
Club Punta Fuego	460K	
Eagleridge Golf Club "A"	200K	180K
Eagleridge Golf Club "B"	290K	-
Eagleridge Golf Club "C"	280K	
Eastridge Golf Club "A"	110K	30K
Eastridge Golf Club "B"	120K	100K
Forest Hills Golf Club "A"	150K	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	190K	
Manila Golf Club (Indv)	please call	11.3M
Manila Golf Club (Corp)	please call	11.3M
Manila Polo Club	-	3M
Manila Southwoods "A"		380K
Manila Southwoods "B"		680K
Orchard Golf Club "A"	140K	
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	300K
Phil. Columbian Association		30K
Puerto Azul Golf Club		60K
Quezon City Sports Club	160K	-
Riviera Golf Club "A"	190K	
Riviera Golf Club "B"		140K
Riviera Sports & C.C.	80K	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	280K	
Spa & Lodge		800K
Sta. Elena Golf Club "A"		please call
The Country Club at TH		380K
Tagaytay Midlands		880K
The Palms Country Club	-	830K
Valley Golf Club	please call	230K
Valle Verde-Corp	please call	
Wack Wack Golf Club	please call	please call

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$100-M . . .

From page B3

the Philippines.

Purisima added that Japanese doctors would most likely be able to practice in the hospital to attract more medical tourists. He had said the government was looking at establishing "medical zones" in the country following commitments from Japan-based healthcare providers to set up hospitals and retirement facilities here.

Another Japanese firm—Sanyo Emeritus Corp.—is looking at the possibility of building a retirement village in Tagaytay City because it is near Metro Manila and its medical facilities.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 22, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	52,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27.5	27.5	26.5	27	713,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57	57	54.5	54.5	1,012,400
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	100
Citystate Savings Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	1,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.75	2,770,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	47.5	47.5	6,600
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	175,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	35.5	36.5	35.5	36	166,600
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	98	98	98	98	500
Philippine National Bank	36.5	36.5	35	35.5	86,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	1,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	41,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	325,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	150	150	1,090
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1720	1720	1720	1720	300
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	16	16	16	150,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.22	1.26	4,008,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	900	890	890	26,110
Ipeople Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.85	155,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.05	0.05	5,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	2,100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	3,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.45	3.5	3.45	3.5	1,666,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	23,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1430	1435	1425	1430	92,790
Ivantage Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1,260,000
Philweb Corp.	0.021	0.021	0.019	0.02	117,700,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	30,000
Manila Electric Co. B	28.5	28.5	27	27.5	933,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.4	6.4	42,036,000
Petron Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.75	3.75	5,681,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.52	1.54	1.48	1.5	1,121,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.7	1.76	1.68	1.7	1,039,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8	8.1	8	8	2,739,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.58	70,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	360,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.6	3.65	726,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	35,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	60,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	17,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	36	36	35	35	114,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	27.5	65,900
Pancake House Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	30,000
RFM Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.96	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	40,800
San Miguel Corp. B	81	81	80	81	122,500
Universal Robina Corp.	12	12	12	12	105,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	650,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	249,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	42,500,000
Ayala Corp.	7.8	7.8	7.5	7.6	3,476,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.85	984,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.06	2.06	234,000
APC Group Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.38	0.38	1,800,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	35,000,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	6,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.7	40,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	2,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.8	0.8	0.78	0.78	110,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	24.5	25	24.25	24.75	50,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.08	1.1	25,966,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	50,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	680,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	2,110,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.65	3.7	3.55	3.6	1,837,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	3,000,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	630,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	10	10	10	10	356,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	57.5	57.5	54.5	54.5	879,500
House Of Investments Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1,125,000
Ionics Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.58	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.65	355,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.02	2.02	118,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.56	1.56	3,840,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	550,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	13,950,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	600,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	106,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	260,000
SM Investments Corp.	248	248	234	241	6,104,400
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	8,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	660,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.34	1,260,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	14,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	7.9	8	7.9	8	25,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.62	1.7	1.6	1.7	187,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	2,580,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.26	1.32	1.24	1.3	19,975,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1	1.06	1	1	1,180,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.48	1.54	1.48	1.54	1,462,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	3,710,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15.5	15.5	15.25	15.5	362,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	6,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.1	8.1	5,482,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	47,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	2,927,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.32	4,900,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,480,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.49	0.5	26,140,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.66	1.66	9,780,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.36	2.36	150,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	170,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	200,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.19	790,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.65	4.65	950,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.66	1.66	412,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.9	3,171,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	10,200,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	152,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.2	8.7	8.2	8.5	70,000
Benguet Corp. B	22	24	22	24	19,200
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	4,920,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	1,110,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	19,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	78,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	167,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	300,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.4	350,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	40	40.5	39.5	39.5	2,105,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	400,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	80,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	200,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	10,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.18	0.185	0.17	0.18	11,460,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.38	0.42	0.38	0.42	120,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	5,353,090	92,781,650.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	626,196,400	4,798,714,205.00
PRO	56,749,000	110,717,320.00
Mining	283,626,600	92,768,690.00
OIL	101,890,000	2,935,400.00
GRAND TOTALS	1,073,815,090	5,097,917,265.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	604.83	DOWN 21.69
Comm'l & Ind'l	3,127.50	DOWN 33.20
PRO	758.65	DOWN 16.56
Mining	3,323.19	DOWN 0.52
OIL	2.89	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,195.13	DOWN 8.04
Composite	1,999.15	DOWN 34.63

NO. OF ADVANCES: 19; NO. OF DECLINES: 65; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 54; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES 138, NO. OF TRADES: 4,929

CURRENCIES

March 22, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.759244	1.000000	54.2660
Japan	Yen	0.007225	0.009516	0.5164
United Kingdom	Pound	1.440817	1.897700	102.9806
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097349	0.128218	6.9579
Switzerland	Franc	0.644629	0.849041	46.0741
Canada	Dollar	0.627008	0.825832	44.8146
Singapore	Dollar	0.466022	0.613798	33.3084
Australia	Dollar	0.596936	0.786225	42.6653
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.013962	2.652590	143.9454
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202454	0.266652	14.4701
Brunei	Dollar	0.464596	0.611920	33.2065
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000080	0.000106	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019686	0.025928	1.4070
UAE	Dirham	0.206721	0.272272	14.7751
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.317100	71.4737
Argentina	Peso	0.260461	0.343053	18.6161
Brazil	Real	0.279185	0.367715	19.9544
Denmark	Kroner	0.134275	0.176853	9.5971
India	Rupee	0.017410	0.022931	1.2444
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.199828	0.263193	14.2824
Mexico	New Peso	0.067518	0.088928	4.8258
New Zealand	Dollar	0.559337	0.736703	39.9779
Norway	Kroner	0.122712	0.161624	8.7707
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012790	0.016846	0.9142
South Africa	Rand	0.124978	0.164609	8.9327
Korea	Won	0.000752	0.000991	0.0538
Sweden	Kroner	0.109594	0.144346	7.8331
Syria	Pound	0.014626	0.019264	1.0454
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024374	0.032103	1.7421

Napocor power sales up 5.98%

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. sold 5.89 percent more electricity last year due to increased demand from the Manila Electric Co., the country's largest private electric utility.

Data from Napocor's sales and services group showed that total power sales last year inched up to 37,042.03 gigawatt-hours, from 34,980.18 GWH in 2003.

Luzon exhibited the highest growth of 5.42 percent to 24,271.28 GWH last year, from 23,022.67 GWH in 2003, largely due to Meralco's demand.

Meralco bought 16,098.67 GWH of electricity from Napocor last year, up 4.44 percent from 15,414.45 GWH in 2003.

Meralco is Napocor's single biggest customer, accounting for 66.32 percent of total sales in Luzon.

Apart from Meralco, other customers that contributed to higher 2004 Luzon grid sales in Luzon included distribution utilities Pampanga II Electric Cooperative Inc., Clark Electric Distribution Corp., and San Fernando Electric Light and Power Co. Inc.

Industrial customers such as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in Bataan and Baguio City, as well as Megapack Container Corp. also contributed to higher Luzon sales last year.

Sales in the Visayas grid likewise grew 9.07 percent to 4,104.41 GWH last year from 3,762.92 GWH in 2003.

Among the biggest contributors to Visayas power sales were the Visayas Electric Company, Napocor's single biggest customer in that grid; Aboitiz Land Inc.; Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp.; Central Negros Electric Cooperative Inc.; and Aklan Electric Cooperative Inc.

As with the two main grids, Mindanao power sales also grew in 2004, jumping by 9.26 percent to 6,613.60 GWH from 6,052.83 GWH the previous year.

The growth in Mindanao sales was attributed mainly to large power distributors Davao Light and Power Co., Cagayan Electric Power and Light Co. and Davao del Norte Electric Cooperative Inc.

Industrial customers like Global Steelworks International Inc. (formerly National Steel Corp.), Mindanao Silicon Metal Corp., and Maria Cristina Chemical Industries Inc. also boosted Mindanao power sales.

New rating system for 14 foreign banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has decided to put the 14 foreign bank branches in the country under a rating system different from that used on local banks.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Alberto Reyes told reporters last week that the 14 foreign bank branches would be rated under the Roca rating system.

The Roca system, similar to the scheme used by US banking supervisors, refers to risk management, operations, control and asset quality.

The Camels system used on local banks, on the other hand, refers to six key factors used in bank examination: capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk.

"The only key difference between the Roca and Camels systems is that under Roca, management is no longer being rated," Reyes said.

"The foreign bank branches are, after all, under the supervision of their parent banks," he said.

The ratings reflect the BSP's assessment of the bank's operations.

The BSP gives banks a rating of one to five, with five as the highest.

The foreign banks that first set up business here include Citibank, HSBC, Standard Chartered and Bank of America.

Ten years ago, banking laws were liberalized to allow the entry of 10 new players.

The new foreign banks, however, have taken a conservative lending stance, similar to that taken by local banks that shied away from aggressive lending due to substantial bad loans.

As such, the BSP has also said it would draw up new policy guidelines to prompt foreign banks, particularly those which opened local branches after 1994, to boost their domestic lending operations.

The Monetary Board, in an earlier meeting, had called the attention of about seven foreign banks that had not used their funds for loans.

The bulk of the funds were instead invested in risk-free investments, such as Philippine bonds.

INSULAR LIFE

UNIT PRICES (in Php)

Investment Funds of Wealth Builder	March 22, 2005	March 15, 2005
Fixed Income Fund	1.001545	1.00
Balanced Fund	0.996729	1.00
Equity Fund	0.985645	1.00

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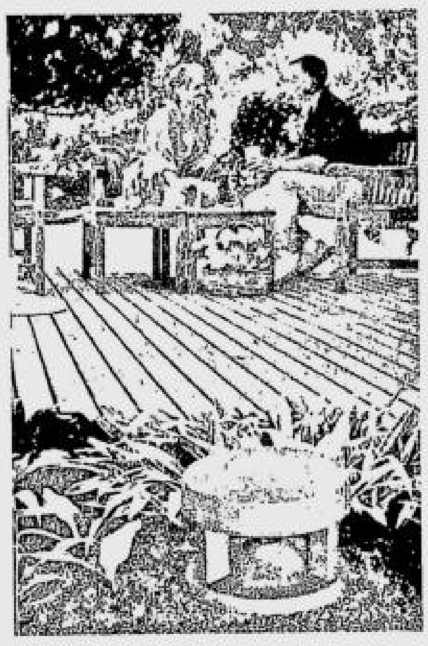

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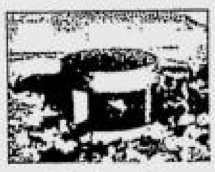
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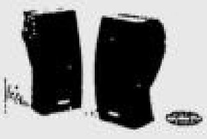
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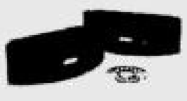
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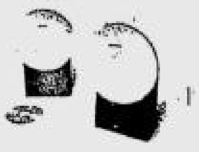
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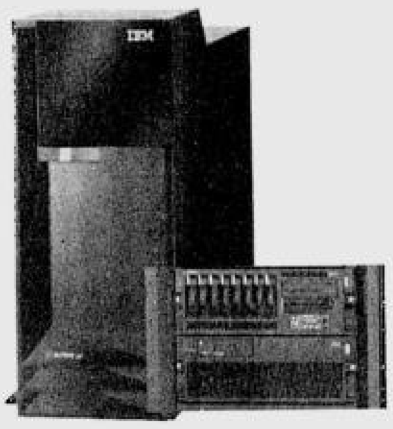

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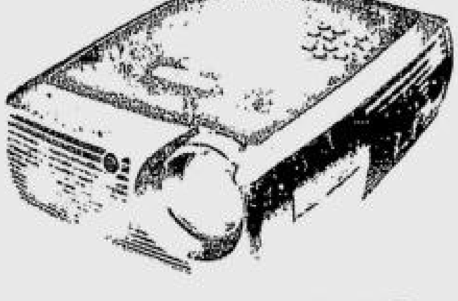

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Napocor power sales up 5.98%

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. sold 5.89 percent more electricity last year due to increased demand from the Manila Electric Co., the country's largest private electric utility.

Data from Napocor's sales and services group showed that total power sales last year inched up to 37,042.03 gigawatt-hours, from 34,980.18 GWH in 2003.

Luzon exhibited the highest growth of 5.42 percent to 24,271.28 GWH last year, from 23,022.67 GWH in 2003, largely due to Meralco's demand.

Meralco bought 16,098.67 GWH of electricity from Napocor last year, up 4.44 percent from 15,414.45 GWH in 2003.

Meralco is Napocor's single biggest customer, accounting for 66.32 percent of total sales in Luzon.

Apart from Meralco, other customers that contributed to higher 2004 Luzon grid sales in Luzon included distribution utilities Pampanga II Electric Cooperative Inc., Clark Electric Distribution Corp., and San Fernando Electric Light and Power Co. Inc.

Industrial customers such as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in Bataan and Baguio City, as well as Megapack Container Corp. also contributed to higher Luzon sales last year.

Sales in the Visayas grid likewise grew 9.07 percent to 4,104.41 GWH last year from 3,762.92 GWH in 2003.

Among the biggest contributors to Visayas power sales were the Visayas Electric Company, Napocor's single biggest customer in that grid; Aboitiz Land Inc.; Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp.; Central Negros Electric Cooperative Inc.; and Aklan Electric Cooperative Inc.

As with the two main grids, Mindanao power sales also grew in 2004, jumping by 9.26 percent to 6,613.60 GWH from 6,052.83 GWH the previous year.

The growth in Mindanao sales was attributed mainly to large power distributors Davao Light and Power Co., Cagayan Electric Power and Light Co. and Davao del Norte Electric Cooperative Inc.

Industrial customers like Global Steelworks International Inc. (formerly National Steel Corp.), Mindanao Silicon Metal Corp., and Maria Cristina Chemical Industries Inc. also boosted Mindanao power sales.

New rating system for 14 foreign banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has decided to put the 14 foreign bank branches in the country under a rating system different from that used on local banks.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Alberto Reyes told reporters last week that the 14 foreign bank branches would be rated under the Roca rating system.

The Roca system, similar to the scheme used by US banking supervisors, refers to risk management, operations, control and asset quality.

The Camels system used on local banks, on the other hand, refers to six key factors used in bank examination: capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk.

"The only key difference between the Roca and Camels systems is that under Roca, management is no longer being rated," Reyes said.

"The foreign bank branches are, after all, under the supervision of their parent banks," he said.

The ratings reflect the BSP's assessment of the bank's operations.

The BSP gives banks a rating of one to five, with five as the highest.

The foreign banks that first set up business here include Citibank, HSBC, Standard Chartered and Bank of America.

Ten years ago, banking laws were liberalized to allow the entry of 10 new players.

The new foreign banks, however, have taken a conservative lending stance, similar to that taken by local banks that shied away from aggressive lending due to substantial bad loans.

As such, the BSP has also said it would draw up new policy guidelines to prompt foreign banks, particularly those which opened local branches after 1994, to boost their domestic lending operations.

The Monetary Board, in an earlier meeting, had called the attention of about seven foreign banks that had not used their funds for loans.

The bulk of the funds were instead invested in risk-free investments, such as Philippine bonds.

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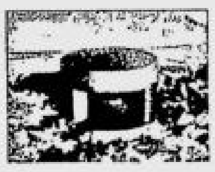

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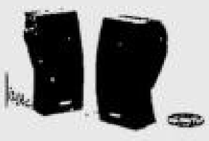

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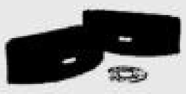

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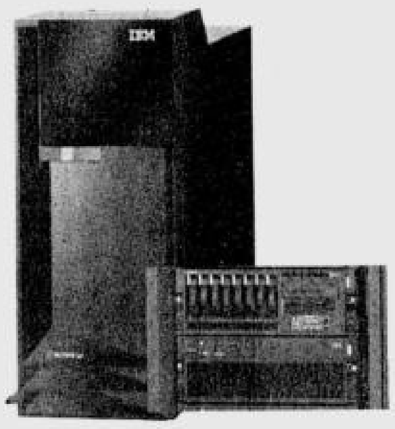

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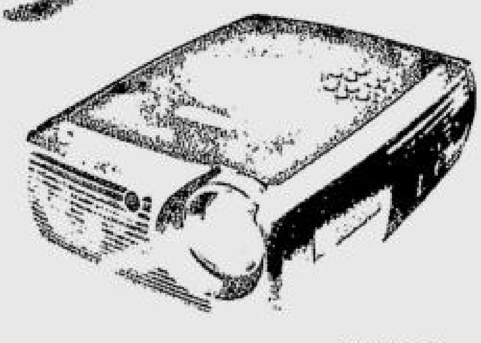

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Dealer's license seen to elude pre-need firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TROUBLED pre-need firm College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. may not be able to renew its dealer's license anytime soon, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The SEC last year suspended CAP's license to sell plans. The regulator ordered the pre-need firm to resolve its trust fund problems first before CAP could secure its dealer's license.

The company's trust fund is a pool of assets that guarantees payment of maturing plans.

Sources at the SEC said that there had been no word from CAP on its reported deal with US investor First American Investments Llc.

CAP had said that the US investor would provide $300 million in loan to the pre-need firm.

SEC chair Fe Barin said she would ask the pre-need firm to meet with her this month to determine the progress of the company's compliance with SEC requirements.

Barin indicated that no ultimatum would be imposed on CAP's compliance. But the company still has to be made aware of the consequence if it fails to work on renewing its dealer's license, Barin said.

To address its capital deficiency, CAP earlier asked the SEC's approval to increase its capital to P8 billion from P300 million through a property for share swap with investors. The deal involves 2,900 hectares of property worth P6 billion.

The SEC has yet to clear the valuation of the property.

CAP is also seeking the SEC's approval of the terms covering the $300-million loan deal it entered with California fund First American Investments.

SEC had reiterated that it needed to see the money first.

CAP has also asked the SEC to help the pre-need firm find a way of computing the amount that CAP would have to pay planholders over the next 30 years.

The SEC recently cleared CAP's sale of a portion of its Metro Rail Transit (MRT) bonds to fund tuition fee payments beginning this month, industry sources said.

The sources added CAP would be selling roughly $8 million of its MRT bonds. CAP's MRT bonds are worth P3 billion today.

Europe commission to reduce tariff on Asean tuna exports

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE EUROPEAN Commission has decided to reduce the tariff on Asean tuna exports in April to aid tsunami-stricken countries in the region.

The move of the EU Council of Member States is seen to increase the yield of Philippine exports to Europe by another 8 to 12 percent.

According to Francisco Buencamino, executive director of the Tuna Canners Association of the Philippines, the country is the least affected by the tsunami tragedy, and it stands to benefit from the EC's recent decision.

"The Philippine tuna industry will get a boost following the lowering of tax rates imposed by the EU on non-preferred countries beginning in April instead of July," noted Buencamino. "This will be implemented until Dec. 31, 2008."

The EU Council of Member States decided to implement its new tariff lines on imported canned and pouched tuna from Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, three months ahead of schedule.

The tariff would be lowered to 12 percent from 24 percent.

Europe's import quota is pegged at 25,000 metric tons. Of these, Thailand would account for 13,000 metric tons, while the Philippines would export 9,000 metric tons. Indonesia would export 2,750 metric tons. Other non-preferred countries in the region would account for the remaining 250 metric tons.

Tuna in aluminum foil pouches has become popular in the European market because the packaging, as compared to traditional canning, preserves the fresh taste and firm texture of the fish.

Tuna is still one of the country's top marine and aquaculture product exports.

The Philippines is the second biggest producer of tuna, next to Taiwan, with an annual yield of 300,000 metric tons valued at more than P18 billion, and foreign exchange earnings of P11 billion, according to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said the Philippines is taking a proactive stance in looking at new markets.

"We are developing new markets like China for Philippine tuna," Yap said.

Nine of the country's tuna canneries are located in General Santos City, where some 50,000 people are directly employed.

In another development, Yap said he would work for better trade terms for the country's tuna exports, particularly the lowering or outright removal of tariffs.

The United States imposes anywhere between 6 percent to 35 percent while the European Union charges from 12 percent to 24 percent on all Philippine-sourced tuna products.

PS Bank eyes 30% growth in '05 net profits

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank, a unit of local banking giant Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., is aiming for a 30-percent growth in net profits this year over 2004, following the expansion of its core consumer banking business.

In an interview, PSBank president Pascual Garcia III said the bank's growth would still come from its consumer business, particularly housing and auto loans.

But Garcia noted that lending to small and medium enterprises was likewise expanding.

Last year, the bank chalked up a net profit of P485.5 million, 20 percent better than in 2003.

Garcia said the bank was targeting a 25-percent loan growth this year based on the projected 7-10 percent growth in volume of the car industry.

However, he said actual car sales in the first two months of the year had been lower than expected, which meant that the bank's loan expansion would likely hit only 20 percent—still within the level of growth seen last year.

"I think that the (car industry's) target is still attainable if the importation of second-hand cars in Subic can be controlled because that's the single biggest factor affecting the car industry's ability to increase sales," Garcia said.

Also, the bank would soon expand its dealership coverage and automating processes.

"Margins have been going down," Garcia said. "The banks that will survive are those that can eliminate inefficiencies and really be productive and effective in new customer acquisition and relationship management."

The past year was a good year for PSBank on the back of its ability to grow its business by acquiring market share from other bank competitors. It invested P250 million in new branches and technology to serve new communities and be more competitive in 2005.

The increase in its 2004 net income reflected the expansion in the total loan portfolio by 21 percent to P24.5 billion. Deposits also increased by P12 billion or 45 percent to P40.2 billion.

The thrift bank's total resources now stand at P46 billion, up by P12 billion or 36 percent from 2003. Total capital is pegged at P4.6 billion.

PSBank is the country's second largest thrift bank in terms of assets, next to the BPI Family Bank. Its earnings per share stood at P2.70 last year while return on equity improved to 11.4 percent from 9.8 percent in 2003.

Half of RP seat entitlements used, says CAB

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES now has 15.1 million seat entitlements annually with foreign and local airlines, but only about 7 million of these seats were actually used by the carriers, according to the Civil Aeronautics Board.

Tomas Manalac, CAB executive director, said the aviation agency was making sure that there would be a sufficient enabling environment for the tourism industry to grow by increasing the airlines' capacity to about 290,000 each week.

"In fact, there is an abundance of seat entitlements that can be flown," said the CAB chief. "The challenge now is to convince the carriers to utilize these rights through enhanced tourism promotions and investments in airport and tourism infrastructure."

Of the 7 million seats used last year, only 4.4 million were inbound passengers. Of these, 2.7 million are flown in by 30 foreign airlines and 1.7 million by 2 Philippine carriers, data from CAB showed.

The Department of Tourism said it attracted 2.29 million tourists in 2004—a record high. The tourists reportedly spent about $2 billion in the country. Tourist arrivals in 2003 reached 1.9 million.

The government hopes to increase tourist arrivals to 5 million over the next five years. The increase is projected to generate an additional 5 million jobs and $5 billion in receipts.

Manalac said the 15.1 million entitlements as of end-2004 was 20 percent more than about 12.5 million in 2002 when Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza took over the department.

He said the 15.1-million seat figure does not include the full potential of the unlimited capacity allowed under the open skies agreement between the Philippines and the United States.

Seat entitlements to significant markets such as China, Japan and the Middle East were increased by 100 percent, 42 percent, and 300 percent, according to the CAB chief.

Liberal treatment of Korean carriers allow them to fly 200 percent of their capacity entitlements.

The United States, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, Canada, Singapore, UK and Germany are the country's top 10 tourism markets.

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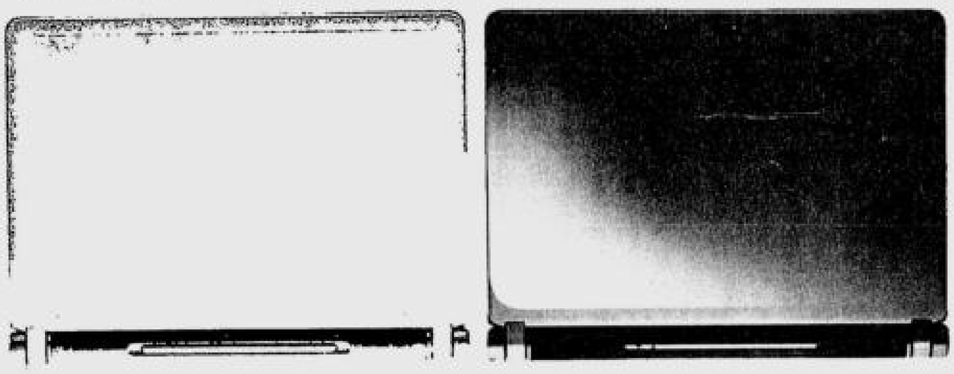

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

BSP to impose tougher penalties on erring banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said it would overhaul its penalty system to better reflect the kinds of violations of banking regulations based on the gravity of the offense.

"We would like to categorize the violations into minor or major," BSP deputy governor for bank supervision Alberto Reyes told reporters.

The BSP has convinced the Senate to give it the authority to raise the maximum fine imposed on erring banks by ten-folds to P300,000 from the current P30,000 per violation. Such a move will, however, require an amendment to the BSP charter.

Reyes said major violations, under the new system, would include unsafe and unsound banking practices or any transaction that risks a bank's solvency, liquidity and profitability.

Another major violation would be the failure to comply with lending limits to directors, officers, stockholders and related interests (dosri), he said.

Reyes said a minor violation would include late compliance with reportorial requirements.

In an interview at the sidelines of a recent Senate hearing on the P8-billion securities fraud case against Standard Chartered Bank, Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Senate committee on banks, financial institutions and currencies, agreed that the BSP's current penalty system and that under the Securities and Regulation Code were insufficient.

Angara said since Congress was in the process of amending the BSP charter, the committee was inclined to give the banking regulator more powers.

"We want to see whether the system of sanctions under the SRC and BSP charter are effective deterrent. Obviously it's not," Angara said.

As such, he said the Senate committee on banks was now willing to hike the BSP's daily penalty per violation to P300,000. The amount represents the maximum amount of fines the BSP can impose per violation of any banking regulation as well as the maximum daily fine for every day of violation until it is resolved.

"Also, we want to give discretionary powers to these agencies," Angara said.

In a recent privilege speech, Enrile who is also vice chair of the Senate committee on banks and financial institutions, accused Standard Chartered of selling unregistered securities which were "high-risk foreign mutual fund securities, falsely advertised and marketed as safe investment haven for our foreign residents and local nationals."

Buenaventura said the BSP had indeed found out that the sale of those securities were illegal, but the BSP was allowed by its charter to slap the bank a maximum of only P30,000 in fines.

"No less than the BSP governor said that there's deficiency in the law," Enrile said.

Buenaventura said the BSP would need stronger powers to better instill discipline among banks. The BSP had asked the 13th Congress for authority to do the following:

- Undertake risk-based consolidated supervision, which would allow the examination of banks as well as their subsidiaries and affiliates engaged in allied activities;
- Compel banks to infuse additional capital, and
- Approve the transfer or acquisition of shares in a bank that would affect a change in the majority ownership.

The BSP had also asked Congress to provide its officers immunity from lawsuits.

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MWSI gets fresh loan offers worth $60M

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE ASIAN Development Bank and the World Bank have offered fresh loans worth $60 million to Maynilad Water Services Inc. to address the company's non-revenue water (NRW) problems, including losses due to pilferage and faulty pipes.

The said loans could be coursed through Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System since Maynilad was prohibited to acquire new loans until its rehabilitation program was finalized and approved by the court.

This is the first time the beleaguered water distributor gets fresh loan offers since its financial woes began in 2001. The company is set to restructure its operations and P18 billion worth of liabilities.

Creditors became bullish on Maynilad when newly installed company president Fiorello Estuar made a presentation of the firm's current activities last week and the efforts exerted to make its operations viable despite the limited funds it had.

"The ADB and the World Bank have expressed interest to grant us loans to solve our NRWS. They saw that with our new strategy, things can be done. Despite our limited time and budget, improvements have been made in the west zone system," Estuar told the INQUIRER.

The loans will be used to repair or replace old and damaged pipes.

He noted that Maynilad's NRW had wiped out a significant portion of its possible earnings.

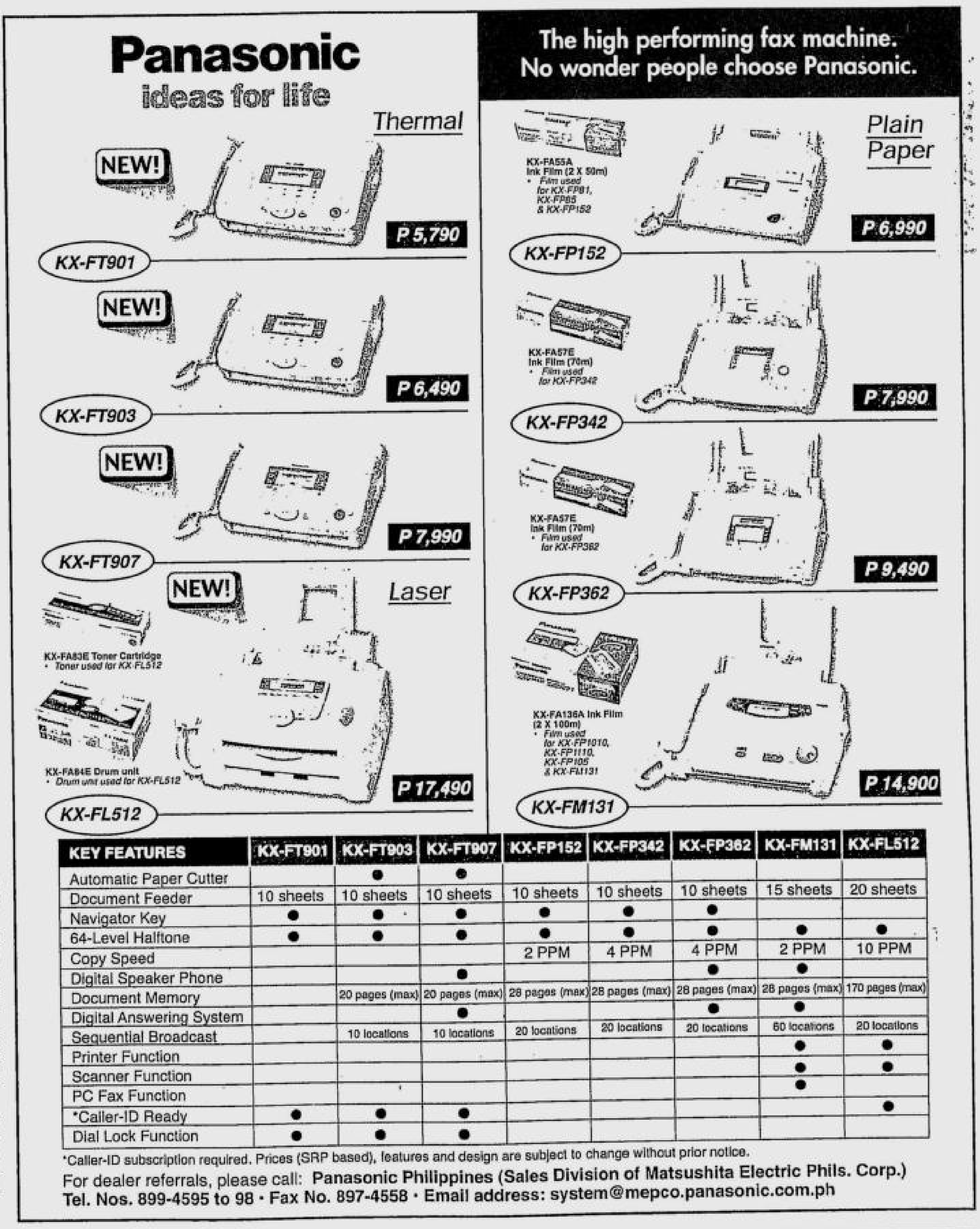
"Our NRW is now at 68 percent and old pipes must really be replaced. Since we do not have the money now, we have to do remedial measures to keep us afloat," he said.

Estuar pointed out that a pilot project in curbing the NRW level in Tondo, Manila was a success and that it had resulted in 41 million liters of additional water that can be delivered to customers per day.

What Maynilad did was close down all malfunctioning pipes and constructed temporary ground-level pipes that now deliver 41 million liters per day in additional water delivered to customers.

The beleaguered Lopez-owned water firm will require P1.16 billion next year for capital expenditure, said Estuar. The company intends to get the amount through the increase in its rates which was implemented last January.

He explained that the rate adjustment to P31.19 per cubic meter would allow the company to place additional water service connections, improve network facilities and ensure a consistent water quality.



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Multilevel marketing firm expands offerings

JC MARTIN Corp., one of the largest multilevel marketing firms in the country, said it was expanding and consolidating its product lines to further strengthen its position as a leader in the local MLM industry.

The announcement was made by JC Martin president and CEO Joey Castro after the company was cleared of charges of pyramiding by the Department of Trade and Industry recently.

"The DTI's favorable decision has provided us the impetus to push through with our plans to further expand our product lines and offer our business partners even more opportunities to earn money through the sale of high-quality, affordable items that are proudly Philippine-made," Castro said.

Castro said JC Martin would be unveiling its summer catalogue soon to include new lines of colognes, shampoos, men's underwear, ladies' lingerie, watches, kitchenware, shoes and bags.

"We would like to assure our business partners and customers that with the release of these new products, JC Martin will continue to make it possible for Filipinos to experience the excellence of our locally made products while earning in the process."

JC Martin's direct marketing approach makes available to thousands of Filipinos, quality products at low prices. "These goods would be beyond the ordinary Filipino budget when it hits the commercial markets."

The DTI Anti-Pyramiding Task Force (APTF) withdrew the charges filed against JC Martin for alleged "pyramiding," a violation of Article 53 of the Consumer Act, after a closer evaluation of the company's marketing plan and business practices revealed that the business of the company focuses on product sales.

According to Castro the "DTI's decision is a welcome development for thousands of small Filipino entrepreneurs who depend on the sale of Philippine-made, quality products through legitimate multilevel marketing." We are grateful to the DTI for the comprehensive solution reached by the parties that vindicated the company and our partners."

Castro said the move was "a testament to the legitimacy of our operations and our vision."

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Editor **Leo Magno**

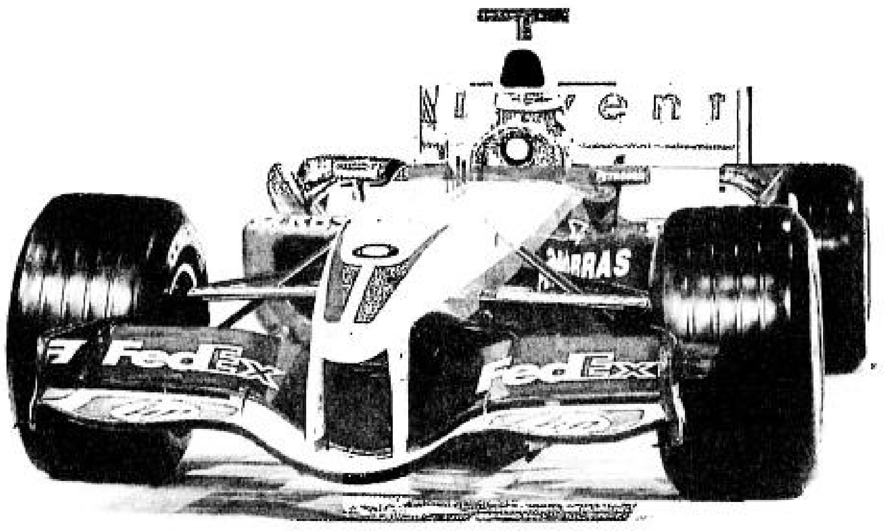
BMW.Williams fills F1 garage with HP technology

By Alexander Villafania
INQ7.Contributor

FORMULA One cars are among the world's most high-tech and expensive road runners, always pushed to a limit that makes the human touch more technology-dependent.

F1 teams often rely on the latest number-crunching computers and simulation software to draw up information on their cars' performance before, during and after each race.

The BMW.Williams Formula 1 team is no exception. Having partnered with HP for six years, it's no wonder BMW.Williams has always employed the latest in telematics (wireless performance data analysis) and computational fluid dynamics (software-based aerodynamics), giving it a technological weapon against its competitors.


THE FW27 F1 was manufactured straight from designs completely drawn using software running on HP computers.

During the last F1 race in Sepang, Malaysia, the BMW.Williams team gave a group of IT reporters an idea of what it's like inside their garage.

The 10-minute tour of the garage was short, but it did showcase a host of processes that the team employs for its races. Nothing like a regular garage, it was more like a spotlessly clean room in an electronics manufacturing plant. The wheels were stored in one corner of the 200 sq m space, while various carbon fiber body plates for three different cars were neatly placed in expandable shelves or wall hangers. Even the F1 seats were spaced from each other to distinguish driver preferences.

BMW.Williams liaisons officer Jonathan Odell was our guide for the 10-minute tour and he said that their drivers, Mark Webber and Nick Heidfeld, had different heights and body mass that required the engineers to customize the driver cockpit and seats. Odell noted that Heidfeld is 5'9" so they had to pull back the break and throttle pedals about a foot closer to the seat. "Webber is the taller guy at 6'1" so we had to push back the pedals," he said.

This did not mean however that Webber's height advantage equaled better performance on the track. In fact, Heidfeld's smaller frame makes him much lighter, giving him better control of the car, Odell said. This meant that despite the car's 4.4-meter length, it did not weigh as much—a total of 605 kg including the driver's weight which affects the car's center of gravity.

Based on the driver's requirements, they relied on HP computers to determine how the car should be set up, Odell explained, and the drivers usually approached the mechanics and software engineers on their experiences with the cars.

"It's necessary that the team actually talks to each other. The driver wouldn't know how the car is performing unless it is monitored in real time by the software engineers while the drivers have to describe to the software engineers how it feels to drive in certain conditions. Then the mechanics go to work on making the physical changes."

New regulations set by the Formula 1 governing body, the FIA, prompted the BMW.Williams team to make major changes in car performance. Among these new rules are the use of the same set of tires and engines on both the qualifying and actual races of the Sepang event. The front and rear aerodynamics of the cars also had to be restricted—forcing the teams to sustain their cars' track performance while saving mileage, the FIA explained.

Add this to the fact that Malaysia is experiencing its hottest and most humid weather in years and that F1 drivers—mostly Europeans acclimated to colder weather—could feel temperatures rise inside their cockpits while speeding down the 5-km track for two straight hours.

BMW.Williams aerodynamics and special projects engineer Frank Derny said the new rules and the hot weather forced the team to come up with new aerodynamic designs that allow increased driver cooling without minimizing their car's lean outline for speed.

"It was a challenge for the team to build that kind of car so we had to go back to software simulations. The car that we have now is more of an experiment," Derny said.

But the development team was in good hands. Housed in BMW's headquarters in Germany and Williams F1's UK office are software engineers who worked on designing an all-new vehicle for the Sepang race. In less than two months, the developers were able to build the new FW27 F1.

About 90 clustered Intel Itanium processors running on the Linux operating system platform from HP and performing computational fluid dynamics (CFD) were used for virtual wind tunnel testing of the new car. Everything from aerodynamics, cooling, structural and crash testing were done entirely on software.

Williams F1 chief designer Gavin Fisher is thankful of their use of software for testing, significantly cutting down the physical testing of models on wind tunnels.

"HP's technology has brought the design team major improvements and 2005 marks a significant escalation in this relationship. HP has played a considerable role in the design and crash testing possibilities for the new FW27 car," he said.

Apart from the traditional sponsorship package that goes with it, BMW.Williams obviously enjoys the benefits of partnering with a computer company for its testing requirements. This is a trend also seen in the other F1 teams who were bent on making their cars faster and more efficient. In retrospect, BMW.Williams sees another meaning to the name of their partner in the race—HP for Horse Power.

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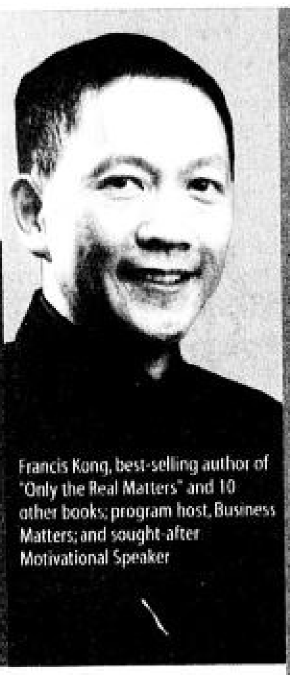
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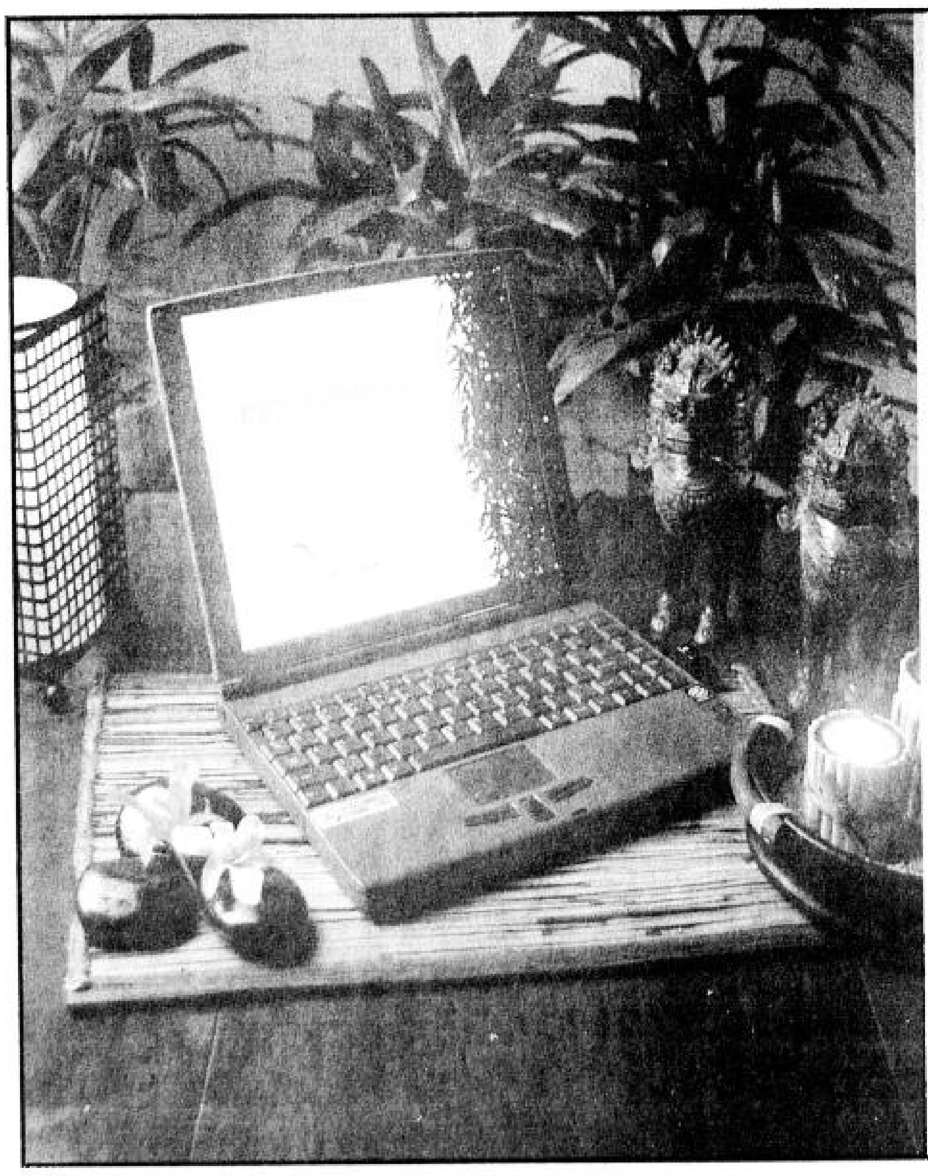

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Asian stock markets seen vulnerable to foreign selling

HONG KONG—Asian stocks outside Japan have fallen nearly 4 percent since reaching a 7-year peak two weeks ago as foreign funds pull out of the region, a trend expected to gather pace with US interest rates heading higher.

Funds that have been borrowing US dollars at low interest rates to invest in higher-risk Asian stocks—known as a carry trade—are unwinding their positions as rising interest rates push up the cost of such trades.

"If things start going against these funds, particularly with the dollar rising, it's an additional risk factor which does trigger further unwinding of the dollar-carry trade," said Ben Rudd, equity strategist at ABN AMRO in Hong Kong.

The US dollar has been strengthening against major currencies since last week in the lead-up to Tuesday's Federal Reserve policy meeting, where the US central bank lifted its key funds rate by 25 basis points to 2.75 percent, as expected.

What wasn't expected was the subtle change in the Fed's language concerning inflation risks, which left open the prospect of more aggressive tightenings.

Dollar buying jumped in early Asia trading on Wednesday, sending the US unit to a one-month high against the euro.

Further dollar strength is expected if US consumer inflation data for February shows a sharp rise, traders said.

The MSCI's index of non-Japan shares in Asia, which hit a seven-year high on March 9, has fallen nearly 4 percent from the peak, but was still up over 2 percent so far in 2005.

According to figures from Nomura, foreign funds have pumped about $9 billion into six Asian markets including India, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia so far in 2005, helping drive South Korea's key KOSPI to a five-year high on March 7 and Taiwan's TAIEX to a near one-year high on March 2.

After eight weeks of buying, foreign investors became net sellers in the week ended March 20, noted Kenneth Chan, analyst at Nomura International (Hong Kong) Ltd.

"In Korea, blue chips such as Hyundai Motor, Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics saw the most selling in dollar terms for the week," he said.

Shares in South Korea's top car maker, Hyundai Motor, have dropped 7 percent since peaking in late January, Samsung Electronics is down more than 5 percent from its February high, while LG Electronics has lost 17 percent from its Feb. 21 peak.

Taiwan saw its heaviest weekly selling last week since January 2004, when data became available, Nomura's Chan added, with foreign investors selling a net NT$2.7 billion.

AU Optronics Corp. plumbed a two-month low on Tuesday, down 15 percent from a seven-month high in February.

Because foreign funds have been a big part of Asian markets' recent bull run, their departure could take a heavy toll.

"For markets to go higher during 2005, either foreign inflows continue and or local investors—like all bears—come out of hibernation," said Elaine Chu, an analyst at Citigroup Smith Barney.

But that appears unlikely any time soon.

"No one tends to be aggressively buying in a market which is falling quite heavily," ABN AMRO's Rudd said.

"So in the short-term, the reality is that there is not going to be much support out there for all these markets, which does point toward further downside risk to come through." *Reuters*

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Diesel demand surge to fuel high oil prices

LONDON—Global diesel demand will keep surging this year and beyond, as economic growth, greater fuel efficiency and favorable tax regimes boost its popularity.

Analysts say this will lead to an increasing strain on the world's gasoline-oriented refining system, particularly in top consumers the United States and China, keeping the heat on record prices for the motor fuel and for light crude oils.

"The oil industry is unprepared for this surge, and the strains on the system will take years to be sorted out unless demand collapses on the back of an economic slowdown," said analysts PFC Energy.

A late winter cold snap this month in the United States and Europe meant refiners struggled to make heating oil and diesel, part of the same distillate production pool, at the same time as building gasoline stocks for peak summer demand.

Heating oil, gasoline and crude futures all hit record highs despite increased crude output from producers cartel Opec, and the risk of an increasing fuel supply shortage may see investment funds push oil futures even higher.

"Distillate supply emerged as a concern in 2004, and things will get significantly worse in the second half of 2005," PFC Energy added.

US demand for diesel from truckers is expected to grow 3.2 percent this year, according to government figures, while in Asian powerhouse China the International Energy Agency sees demand rising 9.2 percent in 2005.

Europe's largest refiner Total forecasts diesel use among Europe's motorists to rise to 68 percent of total consumption by 2010, compared with 55 percent now.

"If you look at what people buy as their road fuel, it is heavily influenced by the tax tariff system," said Al Troner, president of Asia Pacific Energy Consulting Inc.

Drivers get more mileage from a tank with diesel, while it produces less carbon dioxide, leading to lower fuel duty in many European countries as they try to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Total is investing some of last year's record refining profits in increased diesel output in France, but most majors are reluctant to expand capacity in the boom-and-bust sector. *Reuters*

Toyota aims to sell 62,000 hybrids in '05

TOKYO—Toyota Motor Corp. said it planned to sell a combined 62,000 units of its two new hybrid sport utility vehicles (SUVs) worldwide this year, with sales starting in most major markets over the next three months.

Unveiling the new Harrier and Kluger SUVs in Tokyo on Tuesday, Toyota said it expected monthly sales of 500 units in Japan for each model.

Japan's top auto maker plans to export the models, called RX400h and Highlander in most overseas markets, to North America, Europe and Australia between April and June, aiming to sell a total 52,000 units abroad this calendar year.

Sales of fuel-sipping gasoline-electric hybrid vehicles have grown rapidly over the past few years, particularly in the United States and Europe.

But the bulk of the sales is expected to come from the US market, where Toyota has said the Harrier—to be called the Lexus RX400h outside Japan—had collected at least 11,000 pre-sale orders before its April launch despite a price premium of about 500,000 yen ($4,753) over the non-hybrid version.

Including other features such as a high-tech stability control system, the Harrier hybrid—the world's first luxury SUV to mount a hybrid system—costs 850,000 yen more than the gasoline-only version, at 4.095 million yen ($38,920) in Japan.

The world's second-biggest auto maker said it would eventually aim to boost annual hybrid sales to 1 million units.

President Fujio Cho stopped short of providing a specific date for that goal, but said: "If our goal of 300,000 units is reached by this year or next, I think 1 million within the following few years might be possible."

Detroit's Ford Motor Co. last year became the first auto maker to sell a hybrid-version SUV, while General Motors Corp. is also aiming to introduce the technology on its bigger vehicles as more consumers seek better fuel efficiency in light of the recent rise in gasoline prices. *Reuters*

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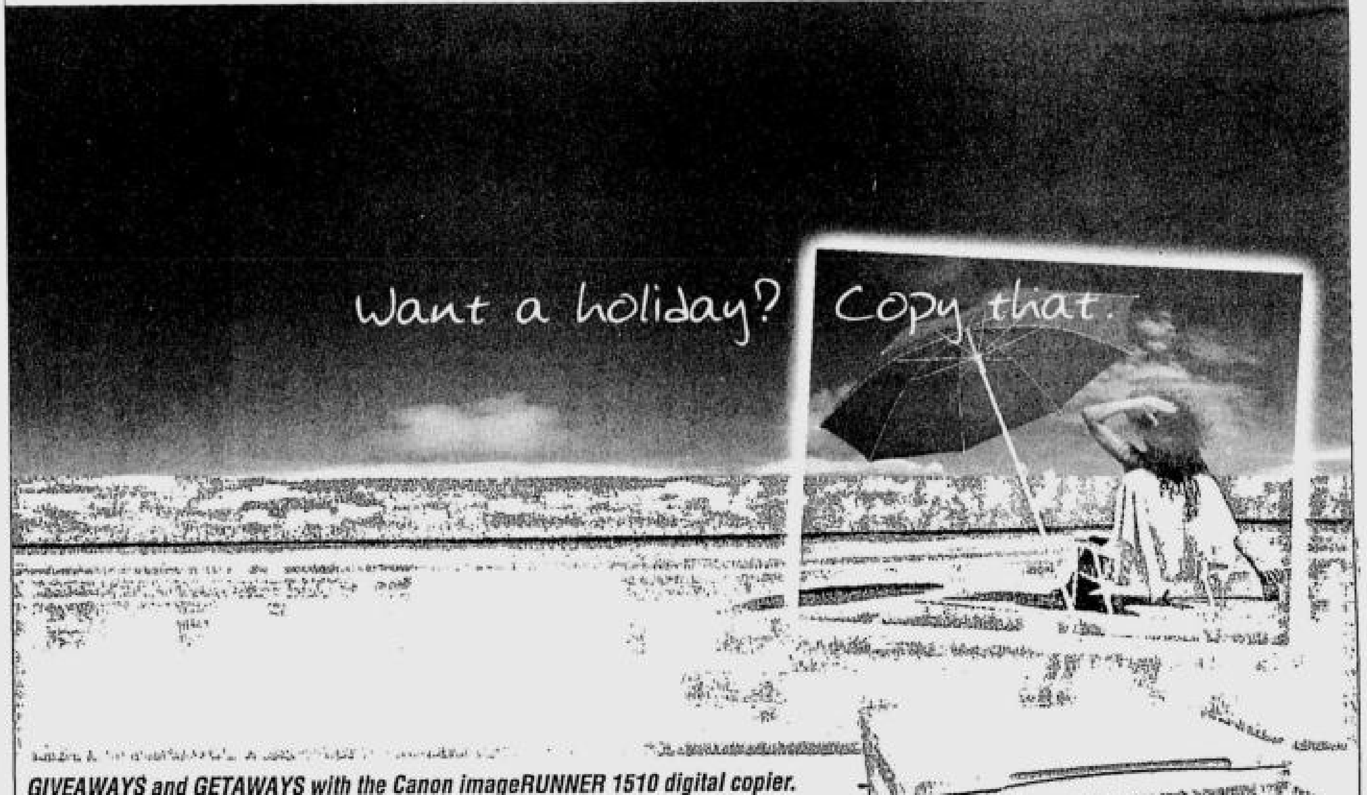
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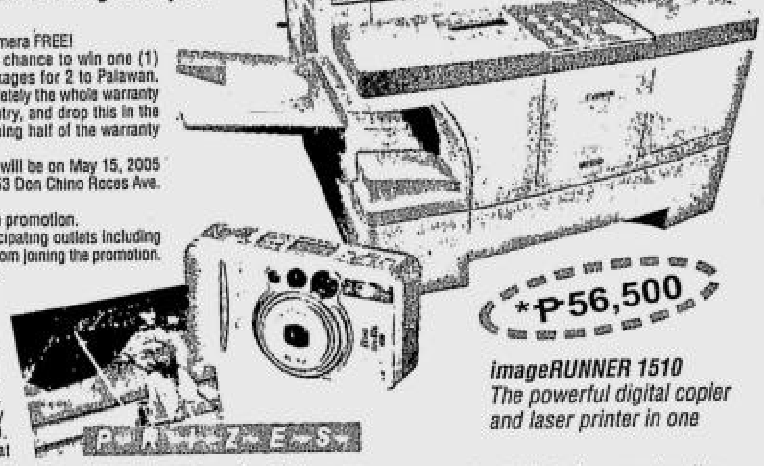
2. Aside from the free camera, customers can also join a raffle promo for a chance to win one (1) of the 3 holiday packages for 2 to Boracay or one (1) of the 3 holiday packages for 2 to Palawan.
3. The warranty card stub will serve as the official raffle stub. Simply fill-out completely the whole warranty card. Tear the other half of the warranty card, which will serve as the raffle entry, and drop this in the drop box located in the dealer office where the unit is purchased. The remaining half of the warranty card will serve as proof for redemption purposes.
4. Deadline for submission of entries is on April 30, 2005, 5:00 PM. Raffle draw will be on May 15, 2005 at 2:00 PM at the Canon Marketing Philippines Main Office at Marvin Plaza, 2153 Don Chino Roces Ave. cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City, under the presence of a DTI representative.
5. All purchases made from March 1 to April 30, 2005 are eligible to join the raffle promotion.
6. Employees of Canon Marketing (Phils.), Inc., Dentsu Philippines, Inc. and participating outlets including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
7. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash. Winners can only win once.
8. Winners will shoulder the required 20% tax for prizes that will exceed P10,000.
9. The list of winners will be published in major publications (PDI, Phil. Star, MB) on May 18, 2005 after the draw. Winners will be notified via registered mail. For the raffle promo, the redemption period shall be within 60 days from receipt of notification letter. For the premium item, redemption period shall be within 60 days from end of promo period.
10. To claim prize, winners must present the warranty stub, a valid I.D. and the registered notice. In the event that the winner cannot present the warranty stub, the winner can still claim his prize upon presentation of valid I.D. and registered notice. For provincial winners, they can claim their prize at the nearest outlet/branch.

Call or hurry to your nearest Canon branch or dealer nationwide!



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*₱56,500

imageRUNNER 1510
The powerful digital copier and laser printer in one

*Special limited promo price offer. Valid only until end of promo period.

Promo Duration: March 1 to April 30, 2005. Per DTI NCR Permit No. 0506, Series of 2005.

Insist on an original warranty issued by Canon Marketing (Philippines), Inc.

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People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Melatonin may help lower risk of colon, rectal cancer

NURSES and other women who work regular night shifts have a higher risk of colon cancer, according to a study. Lack of the natural hormone melatonin is one of the implicated mechanisms.

The study, made by researchers from the Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, confirmed earlier studies that said that women who work graveyard shifts may be at higher risk of having colon and breast cancer.

The study enrolled 78,586 women in a long-running program called the Nurses' Health Study. The result of the study showed that nurses who worked night shifts at least three times a month for 15 years or more had a 35 percent greater risk of colon or rectal cancer.

Shift work disrupts normal melatonin production while increasing levels of other hormones such as estrogen. For most cases, women's cancers are often linked with estrogen, but Dr. Eva Schernhammer, the main author of the study, said melatonin may play a more important role. Melatonin is produced at night and regular exposure to sunlight affects its production cycle. Artificial light suppresses melatonin production.

"Melatonin has well established anti-carcinogenic properties, and a link between exposure at night and cancer risk through the melatonin pathway could offer one plausible explanation for the increased risk we observed," the study said.

Foreign and local experts are now considering supplementation with melatonin, a popularly used food supplement that improves the quality of sleep, to help prevent the development of cancer.

The Philippine distributor of Melatonin-T, Trianon International, endorses it as "an aid to sleep problems, making one enjoy deep, restful sleep and waking up the next day feeling relaxed."

Trianon Melatonin-T is classified as an over-the-counter food supplement, and is available in Mercury and Watson Drug stores nationwide.

According to Russel Reiter of the Center University of Texas Health-Science Center, melatonin hormone, which is secreted cyclically from the pineal gland at the center of the brain, keeps us in sync with the rhythms of the day and the season.

One loses his melatonin hormone as one's biological clock keeps ticking, thus, the need to replenish it with natural supplements.

Sharp decline

One's melatonin level is at its peak at six years of age. The first sharp decline is after puberty when one is about 16 years old. Adults at age 45 secrete only half as much as children. When one becomes 80, melatonin production comes in trickles. This is the reason we seem to sleep less as we grow older. Many think this is normal or physiologic. But the low levels of melatonin may very well explain why the elderly have increased number of pains and degenerative illnesses.

Surprisingly, melatonin, which has been available in the local market for eight years now, has gained raves in the United States for its efficacy both as a nutritional supplement and as a non-habit forming sleep-enhancing pill. It does not have the hangover of a regular sleeping pill. The local Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) has registered it as a food supplement.

Melatonin may also have an anti-aging effect, according to Dr. Walter Pierpaoli, an Italian immunologist and world-renowned authority on melatonin.

In one of his experiments, he gave the melatonin hormone to rodents and restored their youthful levels. They outlived their life expectancies by nearly a third. Many health experts agree that it has an anti-aging and life-prolonging effect in humans.

Pierpaoli and Dr. William Regeson, in their book "The Melatonin Miracle," said: "Melatonin can stop the downward spiral that we have come to associate with aging."

According to Professors Pierpaoli and Regeson, studies suggest that melatonin may also have anti-cancer, anti-aging components, an immune system booster, a cardiovascular function and virility enhancer.

The following drugs may deplete the natural secretion of melatonin: Aspirin, beta-blockers, sleeping pills and tranquilizers. Caffeine, tobacco and alcohol may also reduce melatonin stores in the body. Thus, people taking these drugs and substances may need melatonin supplement.

Melatonin-T is available as 3 mg capsules and the recommended dose is one to two capsules one hour before bedtime.

BPI-DOST BEST PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2005

A partnership between BPI Foundation Inc and the Department of Science and Technology in awarding the best science project of the year commenced on March 11 at the BPI head office, Makati City. The ceremony was attended by experts from DOST and the academe. Standing, from left, are BPI president Aurelio R. Montinola, VP Randy Maranan, VP Corazon Guzman, VP Heidi Ver, VP Roberto Gaudinez, and VP and BPI Foundation executive director Roni Tapia-Merk. Seated, from left, are VP Virginia Cabrera, 1st runner-up Sarah Camille Concepcion of UST, BPI-DOST best project recipient for 2005 Johnny Balidion of UPLB, DOST Sec. Estrella Alabastro, and Violeta Garcia of SLU receiving the award for 2nd runner-up Vanessa Grace de Villa.

First BPI-DOST science project of the year awarded

THE INAUGURAL edition of the BPI-DOST Science Project of the Year 2005 was officially awarded at fitting ceremonies March 11 at the Vigan Room of the Bank of the Philippine Islands head office.

This year's much-coveted top science award was presented to Johnny F. Balidion of the University of the Philippines Los Baños for his project titled "Molecular Characterization of Xanthomonas oryzae pv orzae (ex. Ishiyama) Swings et al, from Different Rice Growing Areas in the Philippines". The study aims to obtain "DNA fingerprints" unique to certain species of bacteria in order to help address plant infections and help prevent disease outbreak in agricultural crops.

BPI president Aurelio Montinola III and Department of Science and Technology Sec. Estrella E. Alabastro, together with BPI vice president and BPI Foundation executive director Roni Tapia Merk and Virginia B. Cabrera, BPI VP and chair of the BPI science committee were on hand to give the top awards.

The next top two winners were Sarah Camille M. Concepcion from the University of Santo Tomas and Vanessa Grace M. de Villa of St. Louis University in Baguio City, who was represented by the university's registrar Violeta C. Garcia. Their research papers on "Potential Anticancer Activity of Turmeric and Saprophytic Fungi as agent for Biodegradation" will contribute to the advancements of medical studies and environmental technology, respectively.

Now on its 16th year, the BPI Science Awards has been instituted by the bank through its BPI Foundation and is elevated to a higher level with the active participation of the DOST as a strategic partner. In his message at the awarding ceremony, Montinola III sees this development as a signal for students with exceptional potentials in the field of science and technology to pursue their dreams as they now have the support of both the private and public sectors.

Montinola noted that this significant partnership has given rise to the first Project of the Year Award among finalists chosen from a wealth of young talents across the nation. He finds the possibilities of these projects generating positive influences even in the international arena.

There are vast opportunities ahead. The BPI-DOST Science Awards instituted by the country's leading banking institution certainly paves the way for more excellent minds to come forward and take on the challenge of science and technology breakthroughs.

MOA Signing Ceremonies
December 16, 2004

MOLDEX PARTNERS WITH NAMPAP

Moldex Products Inc inked a memorandum of agreement with the National Master Plumber Association of the Philippines (Nampap) for the close coordination and collaboration to ensure the effective promotion and implementation of standards for PVC-U plumbing pipes and fittings. The MOA signing ceremony was held at the Fishing Village Restaurant located along Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Shown are the executives of Moldex and Nampap, front row seated (from left) director Abner Pahilanga, vice president Ricardo Vasquez, national president Alberto Cabael, president Roy Joseph Vinuya, Nathaniel Lapida and Chito Medina-Cue. Standing (from left) are Alex Hilario, director Senando Trajico, architect Aida Luz, director Ignacio Aquito, national treasurer Aguinaldo Nollido, chancellor Alberto Azarcon, director Virgilio Simbulan, director Richard Uy and executive secretary Romeo Collado.

Summer schedule for writing workshop

TOWER Book House announces that the summer schedule for a writing workshop for Filipino children from ages 8 to 18 has been set this April.

The workshop hopes to tap children who have the gift of writing as well as those who simply want to improve their writing skills. The workshop includes techniques in discovering one's writing style, strengthening one's style and applying this style in various forms of communication. From style, the workshop tackles essay writing, feature writing, journalism, and playwriting. Field trips from which writing exercises shall be drawn are also included. Emphasis shall be on actual submission of works, which shall be critiqued objectively.

Conducted by one of the country's established book authors, the workshop shall be held on weekdays and weekends, in the morning and afternoon. Interested participants may call 815-4938; 815-6925, or they may visit Windsor Tower, 163 Legaspi Street, Legaspi Village, Makati.

PUNTA FUEGO RAFFLES OFF GRAND CARIBBEAN CRUISE

Punta Fuego Residential Resorts recently culminated its club share cruise promo with a Caribbean party and grand draw at the Terrazas de Punta Fuego. Club share buyer Nonita de la Peña won a cruise for two aboard the world's grandest liner, Cunard Line's Queen Mary 2. Promo partners included Fuego Hotels and Properties Management, which gave away vacation packages at Pearl Farm Davao and Taal Vista Hotel, Cunard Lines, and Le Cellier, distributor of quality French wines. Shown are (from left) Alfredo Roca, COO of Fuego Hotels & Properties Management Corp, winner De la Peña, Eve Cayaban, president of Cruise Professionals Inc, GSA of Cunard Lines, and Joey Zamora, Landco's marketing communications officer for residential resorts.

Best-selling Honda CRV made even better

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc announced recently the new 2005 CRV model line-up. The best-selling SUV in the Philippines, the CRV is given a fresher look and a stronger powerplant to take on the expanding Philippine SUV market.

In addition to the 2.0li DOHC i-VTEC powerplant that is already highly suitable, the new CRV comes with a new 2.4li DOHC i-VTEC engine, capable of 160-hp. The engine is mated to an electronically controlled 5-speed automatic transmission, aiding fuel economy and performance. It also showcases a new Drive-by-Wire throttle that ensures a smoother and more instantaneous response to accelerator pedal inputs, particularly from standstill. The new Real-Time 4WD vastly improves performance and responds better to dynamic driving styles.

Honda's Real Time four-wheel drive system-which automatically engages all-wheel drive only when required-now delivers better road handling and hill climbing performance on slippery surfaces, as well as a swifter response when accelerating around corners or turning out of slippery intersections.

The new CRV features a more aggressive styling to boost its refined toughness. Chrome front grille, cylindrical-shaped headlights, new taillights and body-colored front and rear bumper design give the CRV a bolder and more solid appearance. Newly designed fog lamps, hard spare tire cover, chrome door handles, body colored side mirror are now fitted as standard in the new CRV. Along with the new exterior elements of the CRV, 16-inch alloy-wheels also fill out the flared guards.

Inside, the CRV boasts a higher level of standard equipment. Audio on the CRV has been upgraded to a new 6CD stereo with MP3. The CRV's digital trip display includes self-illuminating meter with fuel consumption gauge. The interior has been significantly enhanced for higher luxury, comfort and convenience. These include enlarged climate control switches, large storage compartments for both driver and side passenger, chrome touches, door lining with book storage and new metallic panel.

In addition, all models now feature a newly designed AT shift lever for a more comfortable grip. Honda has improved rear visibility by introducing a new shape rear headrest in the second row to avoid obscuring rearward vision when fully retracted.

Standard safety features include Honda's G-CON technology, which allows the CRV to meet the world's highest collision safety standards, Dual Supplemental Restraint System (SRS), seatbelt pretensioners with load limiter as well as pedestrian-protecting design that augment the car's excellent overall safety performance. Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) and Electronic Brake Force Distribution System (EDB) were also installed in the CRV models. Additional security features were also included, such as immobilizer system and integrated keyless remote.

Also, in keeping with Honda's commitment to environment preservation, the new CRV complies with the stringent EURO4 emissions standard.

The new CRV comes in four-wheel-drive (4WD) and two-wheel-drive (2WD) variants. The 2WD has Night Hawk Black, Taffeta White, Satin Silver, Red Rock Pearl and Shore Mist as standard color. New colors exclusively available in the 4WD variants are Jade Green, Silver Stone and Pearl White (special color).

The new CRV line-up consists of: 2.0li 2WD M/T(5-seater) at P1,040,000; 2.0li 2WD A/T (5-seater) at P1,090,000; 2.0li 2WD M/T (8-seater) at P1,060,000; and the 2.0li 2WD A/T (8-seater) at P1,110,000.

The 2.4-liter, 4WD line-up includes: 2.4li 4WD M/T (5-seater) at P1,240,000; 2.4li 4WD A/T (5-seater) at P1,290,000; 2.4li 4WD M/T (5-seater, Pearl White Mica) at P1,255,000, and: 2.4li 4WD A/T (5-seater, Pearl White Mica) at P1,305,000.

Sales of the new CR-V began March 15 at all authorized Honda car dealerships nationwide. Testdrive units are available. For more details, log on to www.hondaphil.com.

Product FILES

'Escape Beat' off the press

"ESCAPE Beat", a compilation of writings by Dr. Saturnino P. Javier, is off the press following its successful launching held recently at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City.

"Escape Beat" offers reflections, alternative interpretations, even options and conclusions concerning a myriad of issues-politics, parenthood, medicine, travels, personalities, practices, among others.

These timeless pieces were published in the PHA Newsbriefs, the official newsletter of the 1,000-strong association of Filipino cardiologists considered the premier cardiovascular society in the Philippines; Last Call of Health and Lifestyle Magazine, Men Over Forty of Manila Times and the Quill's Squeal of The Varsitarian, the official student organ of the University of Santo Tomas where he served as editor-in-chief from 1980 to 1981. Javier is the PHA Newsbriefs editor-in-chief.

Escape Beat is available in National Book Store, Powerbook outlets, Fully Booked at Rockwell, Rustan's Flower & Gift Shop at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center and at the Gift Shop of St. Luke's Medical Center.

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC MMSD 2005-008

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) - Materials Management Services Division (MMSD), Materials Management Department (MMD) of National Power Corporation invites all parties interested to apply for eligibility and to bid for the service Contracts listed below.

PROJECT NO. LOGMMSD200503-019: SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS/EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES/MATERIALS AND SUPERVISION FOR THE MANPOWER REQUIREMENT OF NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION OFFICES, PLANTS AND OTHER INSTALLATIONS RELATED TO JANITORIAL MAINTENANCE, LAWN AND GARDEN/ LANDSCAPING AND OTHER RELATED SERVICES.

SCHEDULE	FG	OFFICE/ INSTALLATION	LOCATION	NO. OF MAN POWER	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC) FOR TWO (2) YEARS
I	TMS	BNPP Preservation Project	Morong,Bataan	65	18,421,351.68
II	TMS	Sucat Thermal Power Plant	Sucat, Muntinlupa City	45	13,439,394.00
III	SPUG	Basco Diesel PP	Basco, Batanes	1	798,435.84
		Sabtang Diesel PP	Sabtang, Batanes	1	918,263.20
		Itbayat Diesel PP	Itbayat, Batanes	1	918,263.20
		Calayan Diesel PP	Calayan, Cagayan	1	438,450.00
		Kabugao Diesel PP	Kabugao, Apayao	1	454,727.76
		Lubuagan Diesel PP	Lubuagan, Kalinga	1	336,123.84
		Palanan (Isabela) Diesel PP	Palanan, Isabela	1	403,929.60
		Casiguran (Aurora) Diesel PP	Casiguran, Aurora	1	574,111.20
		Polillo Diesel PP	Polillo, Quezon	1	636,534.00
		Jomalig Diesel PP	Jomalig, Quezon	1	377,536.80
		Patnanungan Diesel PP	Patnanungan, Quezon	1	441,743.28
	TMS	San Roque Multi-Purpose PP	Sn Manuel,Pangasinan	9	2,600,573.04
		Flood Forecasting/FFWSDO	Sn Manuel,Pangasinan	2	664,028.64
	S&S	Baguio Satellite Office	Baguio City	2	911,596.80
			Total	24	10,474,357.20
IV	LOG	Ligao Warehouse & Stockyard	Ligao, Albay	5	1,021,329.36
	TMS	Tiwi-Makban Rehab Proj.	Tiwi, Albay	1	166,745.52
	SPUG	OM CAM Opertns. Divisions	Daraga, Albay	1	721,351.92
		Batan Diesel PP	Batan, Albay	1	644,458.08
		Rapu-rapu Diesel PP	Rapu-rapu Island, Albay	1	934,265.04
		Marinawa Diesel PP	Bato, Catanduanes	2	801,457.92
		Balongbong HEPP	Bato, Catanduanes	3	968,203.44
		Viga Diesel PP	Viga, Catanduanes	1	767,293.20
		Power Barge 110	Viga, Catanduanes	1	675,581.28
		Masbate Diesel PP	Mobo, Masbate	1	247,614.24
		Ticao Diesel PP	Ticao, Masbate	1	449,076.48
		Power Barge 105	Masbate Pier, Masbate	2	515,450.40
		Torrijos Diesel PP	Torrijos, Marinduque	1	365,326.80
		Boac Diesel PP	Boac, Marinduque	2	1,198,591.20
		Power Barge 120	Mogpog, Marinduque	3	1,297,156.32
		OM-Mindoro/Romblon Area	Calapan, Mindoro Or.	3	950,971.92
		Mamburao Diesel PP	Mamburao, Mindoro Occ.	1	546,386.88
		Pulang Lupa DPP	San Jose, Mindoro Occ.	1	559,556.64
		Lubang Diesel PP	Lubang, Mindoro Occ.	1	247,937.04
		Sibuyan Diesel PP	Sibuyan, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Concepcion Diesel PP	Concepcion, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Banton Diesel PP	Banton, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Corcuera Diesel PP	Corcuera, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		San Jose Diesel PP	San Jose, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Romblon Diesel PP	Romblon, Romblon	1	247,937.04
		Power Barge 114	Romblon Pier, Rombl.	1	348,705.12
		Tablas Diesel PP	Tablas, Romblon	1	247,937.04
		Power Barge 109	Tablas Island, Romblon	1	348,705.12
			Total	41	16,606,126.80
V	TMS	Palawan Backbone Project	Pto. Prin., Palawan	2	975,289.44
	SPUG	OM-Palawan Area	Pto Prin., Palawan	1	613,480.08
		El Nido Diesel PP	El Nido, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		SPUG	San Vicente, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Cuyo Diesel PP	Cuyo, Palawan	1	545,076.24
		Busuanga Diesel PP	Coron, Busuanga,Pal.	1	545,076.24
		Culion Diesel PP	Culion, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Linapacan Diesel PP	Linapacan, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Araceli Diesel PP	Araceli, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Balabac Diesel PP	Balabac, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Agutaya Diesel PP	Agutaya, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Cagayancillo Diesel PP	Cagayancillo, Palawan	1	545,076.24
		Puerto Princesa DPP	Pto. Prin., Palawan	1	947,435.04
		Power Barge 106	Pto. Prin., Palawan	2	707,394.72
		Roxas Diesel PP	Roxas, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Taytay Diesel PP	Taytay, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Brooke's Pt. Substation	Brks. Pt., Palawan	1	602,070.00
		Narra Substation	Narra, Palawan	2	697,650.72
		Irawan Substation	Pto. Prin., Palawan	2	795,155.52
			Total	23	15,382,089.60
VI	SPUG	OM SPUG Visayas	Cebu City	4	1,101,337.68
		MTSD Visayas	Cebu City	1	190,051.44
		Naga Mooring Facility	Naga, Cebu	2	604,450.80
		Biri Diesel PP	Biri, Samar	1	327,160.08
		Camotes Diesel PP	Camotes, Cebu	2	445,120.32
		Bantayan Diesel PP	Bantayan, Cebu	2	704,946.48
		Power Barge 116	Madridejos, Cebu	1	405,877.92
		Siquijor Diesel PP	Candaney, Siquijor	2	890,004.72
		Power Barge 113	Lazi, Siquijor	1	574,626.96
	TMS	APD: Cebu Diesel PP	Toledo City, Cebu	17	3,842,201.28
		PMD: Dingle DPP-II	Dingle, Ilo-Ilo	2	643,152.24
	IPP	Visayas Office	Cebu City	1	569,658.00
	S&S	Satellite Office	Cebu City	1	254,524.80
			Total	37	10,553,112.72
			Grand Total	*235*	*84,876,432.00*

1. Application for eligibility and to bid is open to all janitorial and manpower agencies who are:
   - a. Actively registered with the Securities and Exchange Committee (SEC) and or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
   - b. Duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), in case of Cooperatives;
   - c. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships;
   - d. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
   - e. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
   - f. Entities forming themselves into a joint venture that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: *Provided, however,* that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%);
   - g. Has been operating for at least two (2) years preceding the submission of application for eligibility;
   - h. Shall not have any relationship to the Head of the procuring entity up to the third (3rd) civil degree by consanguinity or affinity.
   - i. Have no record of unsatisfactory performance or disqualification to participate public bidding with NPC or in any kind of contract with Philippine Government.
   - j. Must be able to finance at least one (1) month salary of their personnel in case there is delay in collection.
   - k. Shall not have three (3) or more outstanding or existing janitorial and skilled manpower service contracts with NPC. However, should the contractor has three (3) or more existing/outstanding contracts with NPC, he may apply if the third (3rd) or other succeeding contracts has less than six (6) months remaining period of duration. Or the prospective bidder can apply if the is the existing contractor of the contract to be bid even if the has three (3) or more existing contracts with NPC.
   - l. Shall not have an outstanding adverse and unresolved complaint vis-à-vis NPC, constituting loss of trust and confidence between NPC and the prospective bidder.
   - m. Shall not have pending administrative case for the violation of SSS and minimum wage laws.
2. The value of the prospective bidders largest single contract similar to the contract to be bid must be at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid (ABC).
3. The prospective bidder must present a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC to be bid, or must have a Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which must be at least equal to the ABC to be bid.
4. Contract duration is for two (2) years unless sooner terminated. Source of funding is thru Internal Cash Generation. Only bids within the Approved Budget for Contract to be bid shall be accepted.

Eligibility and bid documents will be available for issuance from **March 28 to April 21, 2005, 8:30 to 11:30 AM** at Materials Management Services Division (MMSD) - Materials Management Department (MMD) Bldg. 1, National Power Corporation, cor. BIR Rd. Diliman Quezon City, upon submission of:

1. SEC/DTI/CDA registration
2. Payment of non-refundable fee of One Thousand pesos Only (P 1,000.00) per schedule

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for eligibility and bid documents, forms and statements shall be on May 5, 2005, 10:00 A.M. at Kañao Function Room. If the date is declared a non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted. **A pre bid conference shall be conducted on April 21, 2005, 2:00 P.M. at Kañao Function Room.**

Single Stage Bidding with post qualification, under R.A. 9184 shall be applied for this project.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman
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MMSD-NPC

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Item No.	Description	Location	Minimum/ Floor Price
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05-3	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 170 sq.m.	B8, L4 Mutual Homes Subdivision Ph-III, Putatan, Muntinlupa City	P 602,140.00
05-4	House & Lot F/A 142 sq.m. L/A 134 sq.m.	B10, L8, Area H, San Rafael, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan	P 346,239.21
05-5	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 198 sq.m.	B12, L3 AFP Village, San Mateo, Rizal	P 318,367.50
05-6	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 198 sq.m.	B16 L17 AFP Village, San Mateo, Rizal	P 287,512.50
05-7	House & Lot L/A 138 sq.m. F/A 143 sq.m.	B7, L3 North Matrixville, Camarin Rd., Caloocan City	P 963,007.50
05-8	House & Lot F/A 42 sq.m. L/A 198 sq.m.	B9, L10 AFP Village, San Mateo, Rizal	P 346,519.80
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05-10	House & Lot F/A 162 sq.m. L/A 315 sq.m.	B15 L21 #112 Santan Sta., Phase I United Parañaque IV Subdivison Parañaque City	P 1,881,900
05-11	539 sq.m. Residential Lot	B8, L43, Greenbreeze Village VI Bgy. Biclatan, Gen. Trias, Cavite	P 274,890.00
05-12	294 sq.m. Residential Lot	B3, L8, Filinvest, Bgy. Silangan, Capitol, Quezon City	P 1,374,450.00

Interested bidders may obtain bidding documents starting March 28, 2005 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00 from the Office of the Head, Property Management, 3/F, RSBS Bldg., Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

A Pre-Bidding Conference is scheduled on April 8, 2005 at 10:00 am, Central Meeting Room A, RSBS, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders or their representatives on April 15, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the Central Meeting Room A, RSBS, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.

For further inquiries, you can call MS. LIZA HIZON or MR. DARWIN MANZANO at telephone numbers 912-4718 or 911-4071 local 249.

(PDI - March 27, 28 & 29, 2005)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ROGELIO P. AYERS was extrajudicially settled and was sold by his heirs as per Doc. No. 395, Page No. 80, Book No. 02; Series of 2005 under Notary Public Atty. Hilarion T. Omadto, Jr.
(PDI-March 21, 28 & April 4, 2005)

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Central Regional Office Luzon Office
Cabanatuan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR GRAINS HANDLING SERVICES NFA REGION III

The National Food Authority, NFA Central Luzon Regional Office, Cabanatuan City invites all interested Grains Handling Services Contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for handling the movement of grain stocks and by-products in the warehouses, ricemills, and other installations of Region III and to load/unload to/from trucks said commodities with an Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the year 2005 as follows:

PROVINCES	LOT NO	LOCATION OF WAREHOUSES	VOLUME TO BE HANDLED (IN BAGS)	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
Aurora	I	GID-Baler/	163,600	P 647,856.00
		Bartolome-Ma. Aurora/		
		GID-Casiguran		
Bataan	II	GID 1 & 2-Balanga/	287,600	P 1,104,384.00
		FLGC-Dinalupihan		
Bulacan	III	GID 1,2 & 3-Balagtas	483,500	P 2,030,700.00
		GID 1 & 2-Sn Ildefonso	505,000	P 2,121,000.00
	IV	GID-Tikay	338,000	P 1,419,000.00
	V	GID 1 & 2-Sta Rita	295,000	P 1,239,000.00
	VI	TLL Whses-Marilao	440,000	P 1,848,000.00
Nueva Ecija	VII	Whse 1-13-Cab City/	960,005	P 4,070,421.20
		Whse 1 & 2-Gapan		
	VIII	Aliaga Whse-Aliaga/	403,350	P 1,710,204.00
		GID-Bongabon/		
		Guimba Whse 1-2		
Pampanga	IX	Sindalan 1 & 2 San Fernando	632,000	P 2,591,200.00
	X	Del Rosario Whse	246,000	P 1,008,600.00
Tarlac	XI	Whse 1,2,3 & 5-Aguso	405,750	P 1,833,990.00
	XII	GID 1,2 and 3 - La Paz/		
		GID-Concepcion	237,600	P 1,073,952.00
Zambales	XIII	GID/Mango Termina-Iba	138,000	P 604,440.00
	XIV	Wawandue-Subic	95,000	P 416,100.00

The prospective bidder may bid in any or all lots upon payment of a non-refundable application fee of P2,000.00 and submission of a certified photocopy each of the following documents:

1.) DTI business name registration, CDA Registration and/or SEC Registration certificate, whichever may be appropriate;
2.) Valid and Current Mayor's Permit/Official Receipt (OR)

The Issuance of bid documents, pre-bidding conference and bidding proper shall be conducted at the NFA-CLRO, Conference Room, Cabanatuan City on the following schedule:

Particulars	Date
1. Issuance of Application and List of Eligibility Requirements, Bidding Documents	March 28 - April 20, 2005 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Regular WD)
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	April 21, 2005 (10:00 AM)
3. Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals (Opening of Bids will follow immediately)	May 05, 2005 (10:00 AM)

Eligibility criteria includes, among others, that the value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract, adjusted to current prices using the wholesale consumer price index completed and similar to the contract to be bid, must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

The bidding shall be governed by RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. For further inquiries, please contact the RBAC Chairman or the Secretariat at NFA-CLRO Cabanatuan City with Telephone Numbers (044) 463-1167 or (044) 463-1168 and (044) 463-1233.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **RUBEN J. RESIDE**
RBAC Chairman/
Asst. Regional Director

(PDI - March 28 & April 4, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Central Luzon Regional Office

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR HAULING/TRUCKING SERVICES

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY-Central Luzon Regional Office (NFA-CLRO), Cabanatuan City invites all interested Hauling/Trucking Operators to apply for eligibility and to bid for the delivery of grains from Subic Port to the different provinces and warehouses in Region III and Region II and from Cabanatuan City to Baler, Aurora with targeted volume per lot and Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) as follows :

A. NFA IMPORTATION FROM SUBIC PORT

Lot#	RECEIVING PROVINCES	REG	RECEIVING WAREHOUSES	DISTANCE (KM)	VOLUME BAGS	APPROVED ABC
1	AUR	III	Baler	252	6,000	P 303,431.70
			Ma Aurora	270	4,000	221,236.4
				Total	10,000	524,668.10
II	BTN		Balanga	62	100,000	P 1,135,802.80
III	BUL		Malolos	90	158,000	2,279,821.50
			Sn Miguel/Marilao	126	250,000	4,764,375.00
			San Ildefonso	117	150,000	2,707,526.25
			Balagtas	97	210,000	3,265,820.25
				Total	768,000	P 13,017,543.00
IV	NEJ		Cab City	137	278,000	P 5,645,297.35
			Guimba	174	70,000	1,706,637.24
			Aliaga	149	75,000	1,622,610.00
			Gapan	115	50,000	887,081.25
				Total	473,000	P 9,861,625.84
V	PAM		San Fernando Ct	75	340,000	P 4.477,060.50
			Mexico	86	88,000	1,271,030.46
				Total	428,000	P 5,748,090.96
VI	TLC		Aguso	142	108,500	P 2,237,096.40
				154	90,000	1,922,693.39
				Total	195,500	P 4,159,789.79
VII	ZLS		Iba	83	55,000	P 766,682.62
			Wawandue-Subic	1-30	55,000	499,125.00
				Total	110,000	P 1,265,807.62
VIII	Cagayan	II	Tuguegarao	511	18,000	P 834,718.50
			Gonzaga	608	9,000	496,584.00
			Baggao	540	5,000	245,025.00
				Total	32,000	P 1,576,327.50
	Isabela		Santiago	351	17,000	P 541,505.25
			Roxas	415	16,000	602,580.00
			Tumauini	459	16,000	666,468.00
			Cauayan	397	16,000	576,444.00
				Total	65,000	P 2,386,997.25
	N. Viscaya		Bayongbong	288	38,000	P 1,122,941.95
			Bagabag	313	27,000	821,124.51
				Total	65,000	P 1,944,066.47
	Quirino		Maddela	390	7,500	P 265,443.75
			Diffun	355	10,500	338,270.63
			Cabarroguis	362	12,000	394,218.00
				Total	30,000	P 997,932.38
	Allacapan		Matukay	593	15,000	P 807,221.25
	Tabuk		Bulanao, Tabuk	498	13,000	P 587,515.50

B. LOCAL TRANSFER-From Nueva Ecija (Cabanatuan City) to Aurora (Baler)

Lot#	SOURCE	REG	RECEIVING WAREHOUSES	DIK	VOLUME BAG	APPROVED ABC
IX	NFA-Cab C	III	NFA-Baler	115	30,000	P 907,953.75

The minimum number of trucks required must be registered as "Trucks-for-Hire" from Land Transportation Office (LTO). The prospective bidder may bid in any or all specified lot/preferred destinations upon payment of a non-refundable application fee of P3,000.00 and submission of a certified photocopy of the following basic requirements:

1.) DTI business name registration, CDA Registration and/or SEC Registration certificate, whichever may be appropriate;
2.) Valid and current Mayor's Permit and Official Receipt

The Issuance of bid documents, pre-bidding conference and bidding proper shall be conducted at NFA-CLRO, Conference Room, Cabanatuan City on the following schedule:

Particulars	Date
1. Issuance of Application and List of Eligibility Requirements, Bidding Documents	March 28 - April 18, 2005 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Regular WD)
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	April 19, 2005 (10:00 AM)
3. Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals (Opening of Bids will follow immediately)	May 03, 2005 (10:00 AM)

Eligibility criteria includes among others that the value of the prospective bidders largest single contract adjusted to current prices, completed and similar to the contract to be bid, must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

The bidding shall be governed by RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. For further inquiries, please contact the RBAC Chairman or the Secretariat at NFA-CLRO Cabanatuan City at Telephone Numbers (044) 463-1167 or (044) 463-1168.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT OR REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA AND/OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **RUBEN J. RESIDE**
Asst. Regional Director
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - March 28 & April 4, 2005)

BECHTEL OVERSEAS CORPORATION

Accreditation No.: 72912-1

Our client, Bechtel Overseas Corporation for its accredited project in Equatorial Guinea requires the following:

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- Should have a good command of English

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- Must have 5-10 years experience in heavy civil structural work

CARPENTERS

- Must have 5-10 years experience in heavy civil structural work

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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Satellite Communications Project

AFPMP-GHQ-02-002-05

Supply, delivery, installation, commissioning and provisioning of a Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) system composed of a(1) (VSAT) hub station with a Network Management System (NMS), and eight (8) remote VSAT terminals/stations, that shall be integrated to the existing telephony and date network of the AFP for voice, data, and video applications. This includes the operational and maintenance requirements of the system, training for operators and maintenance personnel, and lease of transponder space.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), through the AFP Modernization Program Fund, intends to apply the sum of THIRTY FIVE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY THOUSAND PESOS (PhP35,520,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment under the contract for Satellite Communications Project (AFPMP-GHQ-02-002-05). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The AFP now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for a VSAT system. The expected delivery of GOODS or contract duration is One Hundred Eighty Calendar Days as per SCC Clause 2. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to eligible bidders as per Clause 5.1 of the ITB. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the AFP Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address specified below from **March 21, 2005** until **May 20, 2005**, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P3,500.00). The method of payment will be cash/cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative. Representatives are required to present a Special Power of Attorney (SPA) issued by the prospective Bidder before the issuance of the Bidding Documents and all other transactions in connection therewith.

The AFP will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 4, 2005**, 9:00 a.m. at the Silid Panday Pira, 1/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **May 23, 2005** at 8:30 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in its corresponding amount as prescribe in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on **May 23, 2005** at 9:00 a.m. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at Silid Panday Pira, 1/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

The AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **REAR ADMIRAL JORGE G NECESITO AFP**
Chairman, AFP Bids and Awards Committee

Armed Forces of the Philippines
Modernization Program Management Office
3/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City, Philippines 1110
Tel. No. (632) 911-6001 local 6592
Telefax No. (632) 421-2327
E-mail: pid@info.com.ph
Website: www.info.com.ph/~afpmod

(PDI - March 18 & 28, 2005)

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Pag-IBIG FUND is inviting qualified Contractors/Suppliers to Apply for Eligibility and Bid for the following requirements:

Item No.	Particulars	Agency Budget Ceiling	Cost of bid Documents (Non-Refundable)	Schedule of Pre-Bid Conference
I	Supply, Delivery and Installation of Enterprise Anti-Virus Solution Suite-(Software and Licenses for 3,880 users (Re-Bidding)	P 7,566,000.00	P 1,500.00	April 01, 2005 1:30 p.m.
II	Supply and Delivery of various Computer Peripherals	P 9,826,915.00	P 2,000.00	April 4, 2005 1:30 p.m.

Eligibility Requirements, Terms of Reference and Bid Forms may be obtained from the Procurement Section, Task Force-General Services 7th floor Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Ave., Makati City starting March 18, 2005.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements and opening of Bid Proposals shall be conducted at Room 602, 6th Floor, Pag-IBIG Fund Multi-Purpose Hall, The Atrium of Makati Condominium, Makati Ave., Makati, as follows:

Item No.	Schedule of Opening of Bids (tentative)
I	April 13, 2005; 1:30 p.m.
II	April 18, 2005; 1:30 p.m.

The Pag-IBIG Fund reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality or accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government. Further, the Fund assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this bidding.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Mr. Carlos A. Latorre/Mr. Jose Maria M. Diaz at 811-42-62, 894-58-95 or visit our Corporate Website at **http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph** or e mail us at **hdmfgpis@info.com.ph**.

(Sgd.) **EMMA LINDA B. FARIA**
Senior Vice President, Technical Support Group
Chair, BAC-GS

(PDI--March 18 & 28, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development- V
BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Naga City
☎ 811-7802 local 36 • 473-8936; 473-2334

15 March 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2005-04

PROCUREMENT OF VARIOUS MEDICAL AND OTHER HEALTH-RELATED EQUIPMENT

1. The Bicol Medical Center (BMC), through the Trust Fund for Use of Income and Trust Fund for NVBSP, intends to apply the sum of ***TEN MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THIRTY NINE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED SIXTY FIVE PESOS & 80/100 (Php 10, 539,565.80),*** for the Procurement of Various Medical and other Health-Related Equipment.
2. The Bicol Medical Center (BMC) now invites sealed Bids from eligible suppliers/manufacturers who are qualified to participate for the procurement of the goods below. Copies of the List of Various Medical and other Health-Related Equipment, with specifications and quantities are available at the BAC Secretariat c/o Supply Section, Bicol Medical Center, Naga City.
3. Eligibility of prospective Bidders to participate will be based on compliance to eligibility requirements, using pass/fail non-discretionary criteria, as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), *The Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA)*, and is open to all organizations with at least sixty (60%) percent interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. The process for eligibility check is described in Clause 12 Section II of the Instructions to Bidders. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only those Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check shall be opened and the Purchase Order (PO) awarded to the Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid, provided the Bidder concerned passes the post qualification process.
4. Interested Bidders who wish to Inspect the Bidding Documents and obtain further Information should contact the BAC Secretariat c/o Supply Section, Bicol Medical Center, Naga City, Telephone No. 473-2334; 473-8936, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays. The BMC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties, on ***29 April 2005*** at 9:00 AM at the Library, Bicol Medical Center, Naga City.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Interested Bidders, from ***March 28 to April 29, 2005,*** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00), and submission of a written application to the following address:

   Dr. RODOLFO C. URSUA
   Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
   Bicol Medical Center
   Naga City
6. Bids must be delivered to the above address on ***May 10, 2005*** not later than 9:00 AM, at the Library, Bicol Medical Center, Naga City. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than, a percentage of the approved budget, in any of the following forms/terms:
   - a) Cash, certified check, cashier's / manager's check, Bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit – One Percent (1%)
   - b) Bank Guarantee – One & A Half Percent (1-1/2%)
   - c) GSIS Surety Bond – Two & A Half Percent (2-1/2%)
7. The BMC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to issuance of Purchase Order (PO) without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd) **RODOLFO C. URSUA, MD, FPCS, FPUA**
Medical Specialist II and Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-March 28 & April 4, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
MARGOSATUBIG REGIONAL HOSPITAL
Margosatubig, Zamboanga Del Sur

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Margosatubig Regional Hospital** invites interested parties to apply eligibility and to bid for the supply of Goods categorized as follows:

a.) Drugs and Medicines	-	7,000,000.00
b.) Medical, surgical, laboratory Dental and x-ray supplies	-	4,000,000.00
c.) Hospital Equipments: 1. OR Light 2. ECG Machine 3. Blood Bank ref.	-	2,600,000.00

Source of funding : Regular Appropriations (GAA) and Trust Fund
Approved Budget : P13, 600,000.00

All interested Suppliers/parties may obtain the bidding documents from BAC-MRH Secretariat Margosatubig Regional Hospital, Margosatubig Zamboanga del Sur. Starting April 18, 2005, upon payment of the non-refundable fee of **P1,000.00.**

Pre-Bid Conference will be held on April 19, 2005, Monday at 1:00 PM at the Conference Hall, Margosatubig Regional Hospital, Margosatubig Zamboanga del Sur.

Deadline for the submission of eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals will be on or before May 3, 2005 and eligibility check on May 4, 2005 at 1:00 PM and to be held at the MRH Conference Hall. Opening of bids will be on May 5, 2005 at 1:00 PM of the same venue.

All particulars related to the eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids, post qualification and award of contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act and its implementing rules and regulations".

The MRH assumes no obligations whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any excuse or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bids. Further, the MRH also reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any of the required formality therein and accept the bids most advantageous to the government.

For more information, please inquire from the BAC-MRH Secretariat, Margosatubig Regional Hospital, *Ms. Carlynne G. Castillo,* cell number 09189157822.

(Sgd) **DR. DANILO D. ALFARO**
Medical Officer-III
Chairman, BAC-MRH

(PDI - March 28 & April 4, 2005)

INVITATION TO BID
ON A "BEST OFFER" BASIS

The Owners of real property with a total area of 6,772 square meters located on Tomas Mapua Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila (present site of the Mapua High School), invite interested buyers to bid for the purchase of said property.

Information on the property, bidding rules and documents can be secured by interested buyers upon payment of a non refundable deposit of P100.00 from the person designated below.

Conditions:
1. Sale shall be on an "as is where is" basis.
2. All bidders must comply with the bidding rules.
3. Sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Owners.

THE OWNERS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS THEY MAY CONSIDER AS THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS.

Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on 31 May 2005. The owners, however, reserve the right to change the date of submission to a later date.

For particulars, please contact:

Atty. Manuel R. Roxas
19th Floor, BDO Plaza
8737 Paseo de Roxas
Makati City
Te. No.: 840-3783

(PDI--March 28 & April 3, 2005)

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS
ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC) is inviting interested proponents to participate in the Asset Disposition Program (ADP). The ADP involves the development and privatization of the 65.5 hectares Tourism Complex and the 40 hectares Airport Area, covering a total area of one hundred five and a half (105.5) hectares, more or less.

Interested proponents should submit their Letters of Interest to PPMC and may purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR), which provide the requirements that will enable proponents to participate in the privatization.

The TOR for the project will be issued to interested proponents on March 16 to 18, March 21 to 23 and March 28 to 29 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the PPMC office, Pennsylvania Avenue, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, San Fernando City, La Union, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP20,000.00 payable to PPMC in Cash or Manager's Check.

A conference among interested proponents is tentatively set for March 31, 2005 at the PPMC Office. The objective of the conference is to discuss the property, the TOR and other clarifications from interested proponents. Interested proponents will be informed of the final schedule and venue of the conference through contact numbers submitted to the PPMC.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to:

THE CHAIRMAN
SPECIAL BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Poro Point Management Corporation
Pennsylvania Avenue, Poro, San Fernando City
La Union

or they can contact Ms. Josefa Catherine T. Bada at telephone numbers 242-4016 or 888-5956 or send e-mail at ppmc@sflu.com.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT**
Special Bids and Awards
Committee Chairman

(PDI–March 16, 22 & 28, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
OFFICE OF THE AVP - BICOL CLUSTER
Naga City
SSS Bldg., Concepcion Pequeña, Naga City ☎ (054) 4729792; 4739152; 4720080(F)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID
SECURITY SERVICES

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** is inviting bidders for a two (2) year contract for security services to be rendered at the following branches in the Bicol Area:

Security Service for:	Approved Budget for Two-Year Contract
Naga (7), Legaspi (2), Iriga (2), Daet (3), Virac (2), Goa (2), Masbate (2) Sorsogon (2), Tabaco (2)	P8,681,707.52
Contract Duration:	2-years (Feb. 1, 2006 to Feb. 1, 2008)
Source of Fund:	Maintenance and Repair - Building - Security Services

Application for Eligibility is open to all Security Agencies with at least 5 years experience and with valid license or business permit to undertake the service described herein and must not have been "Blacklisted" by any government agency nor have violated any provisions of the contract with past and existing clients

Distribution of Eligibility Requirements to interested bidders will be from **March 28, 2005** to **April 25, 2005** by the BAC-Bicol Cluster-Secretariat, OAVP-Bicol Cluster, 2nd Floor, SSS Bldg., Concepcion Pequena, Naga City.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements* will be on or before **April 27, 2005** at 2:00 p.m. (original and photocopies for authentication*) for screening on a pass/fail criteria to the BAC-Bicol Cluster Secretariat.

The Terms of Reference, Bid Proposal Form and Draft of the Proposed Contract will be distributed starting **May 2, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.

All eligible bidders issued with bid documents are required to attend the Pre-bidding Conference on **May 19, 2005** at 9:00 a.m. at the Conference Room, OAVP-Bicol Cluster, 2nd Floor, SSS Bldg., Concepcion Pequena, Naga City.

Submission and Opening of duly accomplished Bid Proposal will be on **June 1, 2005** at 9:00 a.m. at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SSS Bldg., Concepcion Pequena, Naga City.

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers (054) 473-9152 or (054) 472 9792.

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **MA. TERESA C. IGNACIO**
AVP & Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
Bicol Cluster

(PDI - March 28, 2005)

PMAP conducts seminars

THE PERSONNEL Management Association of the Philippines sponsored a seminar on designing the pay structure last March 15-16, 2005. At the end of session the participants learned the basic concepts and principles of job pricing; learned how to conduct a salary survey and analyze survey data; understand how pay structures are designed and learned the applications of salary structures. Registration fee is P5,600 for PMAP Members and P7,100 for Non PMAP Members.

A two-day workshop on an overview of labor and employment laws was held last March 16-17, 2005. Registration fee is P4,800 for PMAP Members and P6,300 for Non PMAP Members. This seminar presented the basic laws and rules governing employment and contracting in the Philippine setting as well as the minimum labor standards required of employers, the legal consequences of union organization, the requirements for a valid dismissal, and the labor law enforcement machinery of the Government.

The program entitled the conduct of administrative investigations and dismissal of employmees is scheduled on March 18 and 31, 2005. Registration fee is P7,000 for PMAP Members and P8,500 for Non PMAP Center. At the end of this session, the participants should gain a basic understanding of conducting an administrative investigation as well as the legal basis and procedural requirements for terminating employment.

All programs will be held at PMAP Center in Mandaluyong City. For reservations, please contact The Human Resource Management Development Center at telephone numbers 726-1581; 726-1588 or 726-1532; email address: maylene.gatdula@pmap.org.ph or you may visit the website: www.pmap.org.ph

NFA intensifies market monitoring nationwide

TO ASSURE availability of affordable rice in public markets, the National Food Authority has intensified its market monitoring activities nationwide by deploying more personnel to monitor prices and supply of the staple.

NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. has instructed officials of the food agency across the country to assign a good number of personnel to regularly check the presence of NFA rice in accredited outlets inside public markets nationwide.

Tan warned rice retailers found violating the rules and regulations under the Philippine Grains Standardization Program (PGSP) will be penalized accordingly. He said the worst consequence is the revocation of their license to operate a rice retail outlet.

The price of NFA regular-milled rice remains at P16 per kilogram while well-milled rice is being sold at P18 per kilogram following President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's pronouncement of maintaining rice prices at their present levels for the semester.

In Quirino province, rice monitoring is regularly conducted in the public markets of Diffun, Cabarroguis, Aglipay and Maddela to keep track of rice availability and prices.

The monitoring teams have so far found no violations of the PGSP standards in the area.

Meanwhile, in Region 9, at least 167 establishments were already monitored as of February with 10 retailers penalized, with some of them suffering suspension of their licenses after abusing the rules set by the PGSP.

According to NFA director for Region 9 Ernesto Macasinag, violations often include diversion and overpricing of rice.

"Rice businessmen found diverting their rice allocation or selling these above the prescribed prices will face the corresponding criminal or administrative charges," Tan said.

For complaints, suggestions or inquiries on NFA price monitoring, the public may send their text messages via the Text NFA Program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

Send your resumé instantly.

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Corazon Moratalla Manila

Has gone back to the home of the Father
on 24 March 2005 at the age of 93.

Her children **Lourdes** (†) and **Cesar Ong, Amy** and **Noel Bolinas**; grandchildren **Beverly** and **Bobby, Denggoy** and **Michelle, Anda** and **Mary Rose, Carlo** and **Krisya, Mic** and **Dean**; great grandchildren **Gabriel, Briana, Mica, Casey, Carlos, Kloie** and **Noah**.

The wake is at 475 Arboleda St., Daraga, Albay. A Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on March 28, 2005 at the Daraga Parish Church at 12 o'clock noon and interment will follow. In lieu of flowers, donation to the Daraga Catechetical Fund will lovingly honor her memory.

"Grieve not for me for I am now at peace forever safely at home with the Lord."

CONSUELO DAUDEN vda. de REYES

of Catbalogan Samar; Makati and Vallejo, California

Peacefully joined our Lord and her husband Arturo Muñoz Reyes on March 19, 2005 in Vallejo, California at age 89.

Her bereaved children **Tony & Rosario Cuna**; **Nene** and **Cora Miraflores, Emilia & Franklin Peralta** (†), **Raffy** and **Tessa Cabab**; grandchildren **Maricor, Christy, Mila, Kathleen, Aoie, Menchu, Gerard, A.J, Audrey & Michelle** and great grandchildren, brothers, in-laws and other relatives, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at **Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park**, Makati City.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Parañaque on Wednesday, March 30, 2005 after the 8:30 a.m. Mass.

"God has a reason for allowing things to happen, we may never understand His wisdom but we simply have to trust His will."

Teresita Cababahay Guadalquiver

Has peacefully joined her Creator on March 26, 2005 at the age of 62

Her loving husband Roger

Children & Grandchildren:	Jun - Beah	Leanza, Lindsay
	Ryan - Becca	Rance
	Roy - Ena	Renzo
	Tessa	
Mother:	Luisa	

Brothers, Sister, Relatives and friends request prayers for her everlasting joy in the company of the angels and the saints

Her body lies in state at chapel 6 of the Heritage Park Mortuary and Crematory

Interment is on March 30, 2005 at The Heritage Park after the 9:00am Mass.

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• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
• DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

Our Dearly Beloved

ARNULFO B. AURELLANO

(Former Deputy Governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)

Peacefully joined our Lord on Easter Sunday, March 27, 2005 at the age of 78.

His loving wife **Nilda**; children **Cesar & Theresa, Raul & Joy** (†), **Gil & Michael, Carmela & Rammir**; sisters **Betty & Liling**; grandchildren, nephews & nieces, in-laws, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Jacinto Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City from March 28 to 30, 2005.

Please omit flowers

CLASSIFIEDS

John Maxwell's "Developing the leader within you™ workshop"

Fort Global City, Philippines — March 10, 2005 — Network TwentyOne, Inc. Philippines held another of its powerful interactive workshops developed by renowned author, JOHN C. MAXWELL, *Developing The Leader Within You*™. These 12 powerful sessions in 2 remarkable days were attended by professionals and business owners from leading industries (see photo insert).

"I have come to completely understand in this workshop, that the call to leadership in the organization should not be focused primarily to fill a position or even to just establish a group of most- valued people. It should be an invitation to join the team for the purpose of fashioning a vision that will meet the greatest needs of the people and seeing come into fruition the transformation of the whole organization. The call was not simply a challenge to lead but also to follow, not only a commitment to teach but also to learn and requires not only preaching but a lot of listening. Leadership is a continuing education program of self-discipline, self-knowledge, self-examination and self-correction .everything starts within SELF." – Joyce Pilapil, Training and Organizational Development Manager, Philippine AXA Life

"Blessings are received in many unexpected forms. I considered my participation in the leadership workshop as one, not only for me but for the people whose lives I am part of. This workshop has taught me that success is earned, not for oneself because then, it is worthless. The true leaders are those who use their success to serve others." – Hedy Tordesillas Felipe, School Directress, Morning Star Montessori School, Inc.

To register, or for more information on *Developing The Leader Within You*™, contact Baby at 4330021 / 4343678 ext. 104 and 107, or email corp.training_rp@n21.com.

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INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE and SEALED BIDDING for the SUPPLY of the following:

1.	Treated Wood Pole, CCA (Lawaan/Apitong)		
	a. 30 ft/class 4	300	pcs.
	b. 35 ft/class 4	30	pcs.
2.	Conductor Bare ACSR no. 2	63,837	mtrs.
3.	Anchor Log 8" x 4'	150	pcs.
4.	Transformer, Double Bushing, 13.2/7.62kv / 240v with H.V. tap changer, brand new		
	a. 25kva	8	units
	b. 15kva	3	units
5.	Various Pole Line Hardware, Hot Dip Galvanized		

Interested bidders are required to submit a letter of intent with latest company profile before securing bid forms. Bid forms will be issued upon payment of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php1,500.00) non-refundable.

Pre-bid conference is scheduled on March 30, 2005 at 10:00 a.m., NORSAMELCO Conference Room. Only qualified bidders who were present during the pre-qualification conference will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Opening of bids will be on April 07, 2005. Sealed bid must be accompanied by Bid Security equivalent to 5% of the total bid price in an acceptable form.

The Northern Samar Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NORSAMELCO) hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein, and to accept such bids as may be deemed advantageous to NORSAMELCO

(Sgd.) RAUL S. RAÑOLA
OIC – General Manager

(PDI – March 24, 27 & 28, 2005)

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ELECTRICALS - MITSUBISHI 800 Amp Circuit Breakers; Socket Outlets & Plugs; Transformers; Dimmer Switches; Electrical Meters; CROUSSE-HINDS Explosion Proof Gauges & Switches
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OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT - Office Swivel Chairs; Wooden Office Tables; Computer Tables, Wooden Cabinets; Steel Filing Cabinets; Pedestal Drawers; MANNESMANN MT691 Tally Printers; Printer Toners & Cartridges
MISCELLANEOUS - Aluminum Framed Glass Panels; Steel Chutes; Flash Lights; Table Lamps; Cue Balls; Clay Pots; Car Accessories; Car Seats; DAIKOHU Submersible Pumps; Gate Valves; Bearings, King Size Bed; Door Knob Sets; Kitchen Knives; etc.

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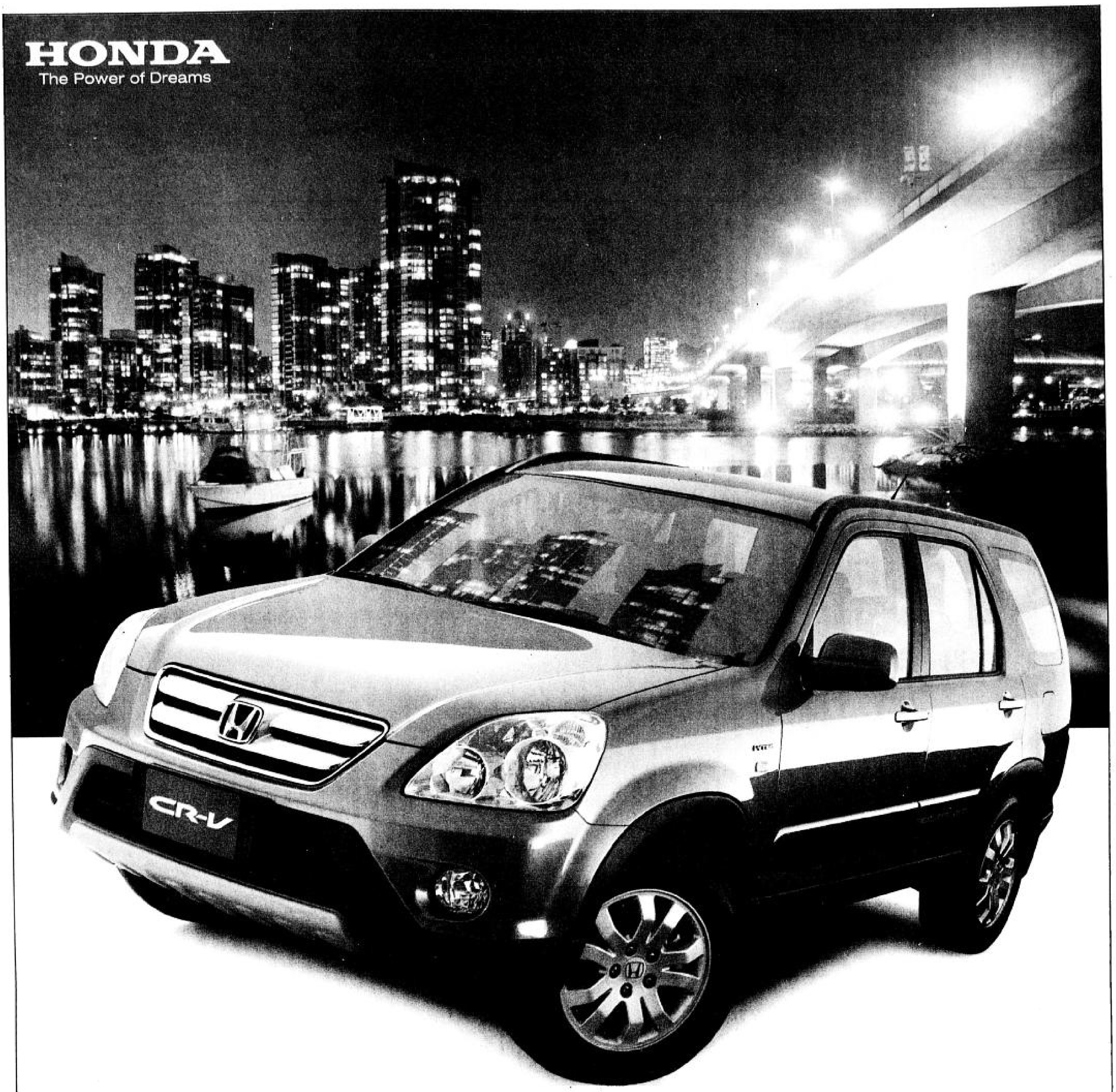

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Consumers now buy goods based on what makers stand for

ROBIN Hood Foundation president Jude Mannion

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

A DIFFERENT kind of customer is emerging in the marketplace.

He not only demands the highest standards of quality for his money, he also wants companies selling products or services to stand for something more than just making a profit.

This was one of the main points put across by Jude Mannion, president of the Robin Hood Foundation, who was in the country recently to discuss "corporate social opportunities" with members of the League of Corporate Foundations.

According to Mannion, what companies do outside their regular business sphere has become one of the major factors affecting buying behavior and customer loyalty abroad.

Customers today not just ask a company what it does differently from the others, but what it is doing to make a difference.

A 2004 consumer behavior study by ACNielsen showed that about six out of 10 consumers in New Zealand bought a product or service because of its association with a charity or worthy cause.

In the United Kingdom, as many as 9 out of 10 consumers bought a product or service associated with a cause or charity they cared about and two out of five European consumers said they were even willing to pay more for environmentally and socially responsible products.

Consumers are also as quick to punish those companies that do harm.

Mannion shared data that said more than four out of 10 American consumers reported having "punished" socially irresponsible companies by not buying their products.

Filipinos are slowly starting to exhibit the same buying characteristics, representing an opportunity for local firms to wear their causes on their sleeve, to set them apart from the competition.

Given today's breed of customers, Mannion said the ability of companies to integrate corporate responsibility projects into the way they do their business has become a strong competitive advantage.

"The competition can, and will, copy everything you do—your research, product, price, promotions and distribution. But one thing they won't copy is what you stand for socially," she said.

Championing a cause also goes a long way in motivating employees to go the extra mile for the company to meet its objectives, with seven out of 10 employees surveyed saying that they have a strong sense of loyalty to socially responsible companies.

Believing that they work for a company that is out there to do something good is a compelling motivator, Mannion said.

Loyalty from customers and employees, she said, is eventually reflected in the bottom line as loyal customers stay and spread the word around to other buyers, and employees become more productive.

"Eventually, what you stand for socially will do more for the brand than other factors," Mannion said.

She shares the example of the partnership between Nike and the Lance Armstrong Foundation, which came up with the ubiquitous yellow Live Strong rubber wrist brands.

The public snapped up the rubber bands because they not only looked good, but also because they were proud of having supported a good cause.

Nike earned not so much from the sale of the rubber bands, but from the immense goodwill toward the company that the campaign generated.

There was also the example of Fidelity Life, an insurance company in New Zealand, which won support from the public because of its novel campaign to support leukemia patients.

She, however, cautioned companies against espousing causes just to make them appear socially responsible, saying that buyers could immediately see through false fronts.

For a cause to work, it has to be something that the company truly believes in, and supported financially and emotionally by employees from the top executive to the lowest ranking employee.

"Doing what needs to be done should no longer be limited to just one department of the organization. Everybody should help in the cause," she said.

Not only does it satisfy every person's desire to do something good, it also makes practical sense.

As the Robin Hood Foundation preaches, doing good is good for business.

WHAT companies do outside their regular business sphere has become one of the major factors affecting buying behavior and customer loyalty abroad.

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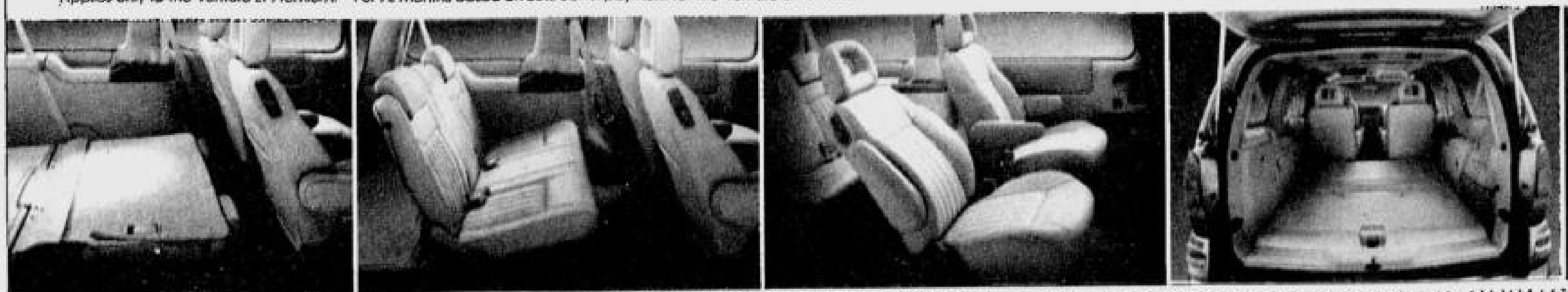

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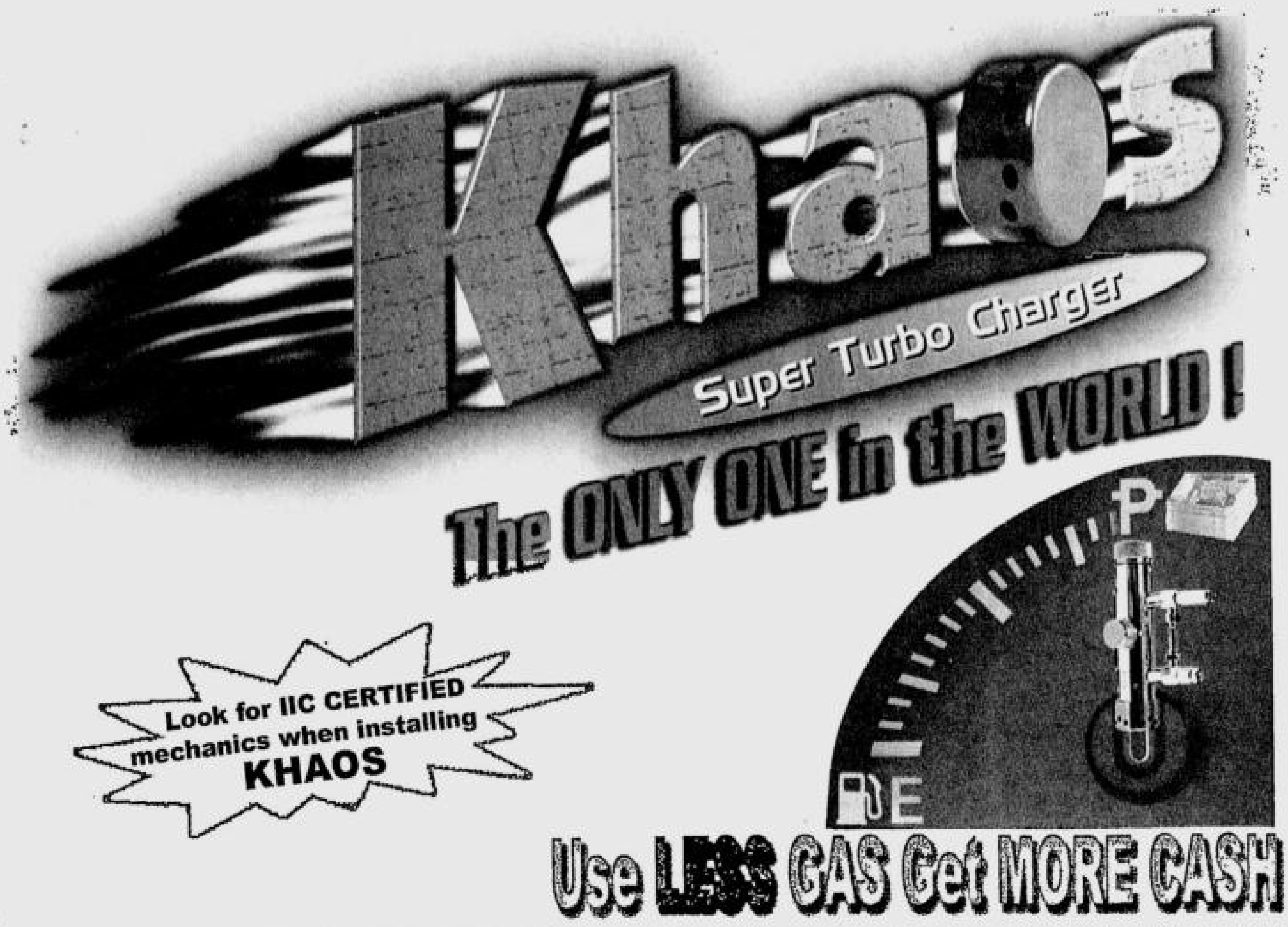
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5 km / Ltr.	20	40	60	80	100
6 km / Ltr.	17	33	50	67	83
7 km / Ltr.	14	29	43	57	71

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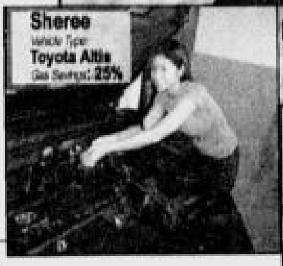

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Innovative solutions to RP's debt problem

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Gabriel Singson

IN OCTOBER 1983, the Philippines for the first time declared to the whole world that it could not pay its external debt, and requested all its bank creditors for a debt moratorium.

Thus far, the Philippines is the only country in Asia that experienced a debt moratorium. I believe that no single event has brought more damage to the economy—not even the 1997 Asian financial crisis—than the 1983 debt moratorium.

Key figures

Just to cite some of economic indicators:

1. P - $ exchange rate went up by almost 100 percent, from P 9.17 on Jan. 3, 1983 to P18.02 to the dollar on June 6, 1984, a period of less than a year and a half.

2. Interest rates. The 91-day T-bill hit 43 percent in Novemebr 1984.

3. GNP in 1984 was negative 9.11

4. Inflation—average inflation for 1984 jumped to 47.1 percent. At the height of the Asian financial crisis in 1998 the average inflation was 9.7 percent.

5. The country had no access to the voluntary capital markets for almost 10 years, 1983 to 1992.

Is 2005 Philippines the same as 1983 Philippines?

My answer is definitely NO.

True, public sector debt as a ratio of GDP is high. Similarly, total external debt of the country as a ratio of GDP is relatively high at 66.2 percent as of September 2004.

Other indicators

However, other indicators need to be considered to show that the country is not as vulnerable as others might think.

1. Medium- and long-term external debt or liabilities with maturities of more than one year, remained over 89 percent of total external debt, indicating prudence in external debt management.

2. The weighted average maturity of all MLT obligations is 17.2 years, with public sector debt averaging at 19.4 years and private sector debt at 11 years.

3. Debt-service ratio to export of goods and receipts from services and income is 17.23 percent. In 1983, it was 33.5 percent.

4. The country's balance of payments (BOP) continues to show steady inflows of foreign exchange, particularly from exports and OFW remittances. Foreign and portfolio investments inflows are on the rebound. As a result, the peso is strengthening.

Having said all of the above, the fact remains that the public sector debt is rising and budgetary deficit is accumulating.

I cannot overemphasize the urgency of fiscal consolidation and public debt reduction. The best way to convince financial markets about the Philippines' credibility as a sovereign borrower is to put public sector finances in order.

Then, and only then, can we strengthen market confidence in the Philippines both as a sovereign borrower, and as a place of investment. If access to the financial markets ceases, then a debt crisis will inevitably follow as what happened to the country in 1983, and to Argentina in 2001.

Last week, an article written by a certain Jephraem Gundzik appeared in Finance Asia argued that a Philippine default ala Argentina is not far-fetched.

If one looks at the fiscal and debt numbers, there is indeed some similarity with Argentina of 2001. Non-financial public sector debt ratio to GDP is around 101 percent, while Argentina had a ratio of 130-145 percent. Both countries were in chronic fiscal deficits.

But the similarity ends there.

External liquidity remains a plus factor for the Philippines, and provides some leeway while we are working at the core of the problem.

Total external debt service ratio to exports is a manageable 22 percent, lower than Argentina's 42 percent. The 22 percent ratio drops significantly to about 17 percent+, if OFW remittances were added to exports of goods.

These ratios highlight:

1. Foreign exchange liquidity to service annually the foreign debt of the Philippines remains comfortable.

2. Bunching up of external debt service is not present.

Aside from this, our floating foreign exchange rate policy provides a safety valve, unlike Argentina which had a fixed exchange rate policy of one Argentinean peso to one US dollar up to 2001.

Now let me comment on some suggestions.

Selective debt repudiation, e.g. the nuclear loan.

I submit this is neither feasible nor workable. Standard in our foreign loan documents is a cross-default provision, meaning default in one foreign loan is a ground for declaring default on other foreign debts.

Secondly, commercial bank loans after several restructurings have been converted into long term, low interest bearing, Brady-type bonds in the early 1990s, and have lost their identity as bank loans.

These bonds are being traded daily, and are probably no longer in the hands of original bank creditors.

Another suggestion being floated is to follow the example of Argentina by defaulting on all debts.

I cannot agree to this suggestion.

First, 2005 Philippines is not 2001 Argentina, as I pointed out.

Second, of the almost $30 billion in outstanding dollar bonds and notes issued by the Philippine Government and private corporations, almost $10 billion is held by Philippine banks, insurance companies, pension and pre-need plan companies.

Of this amount, almost $6 billion is held by Philippine banks funded with FCDU deposits, your deposits and even dollar deposits of OFWs and their families. Should there be a default on these bonds, massive bank runs will surely ensue, and the banking system will collapse.

When Argentina defaulted on all government debt, both local and foreign currency in 2001, the amount of economic and social disruption and dislocation is indeed mind boggling.

It had a debt crisis, a currency crisis, systemic banking, financial and corporate crisis. I cannot think of any other country with such a combination of five crises at once, and at the same time.

In the first year of default, 2001, the Argentinean currency was devalued by almost 300 percent; in 2002, the nominal GDP dropped sharply from $269 billion to $96 billion; inflation and domestic interest rates shot up to 49 percent and 50 percent, respectively, and most Argentineans lost their savings as a result of the collapse of the financial, banking and pension systems; the country could hardly import even highly essential goods; and bankruptcies, kidnappings, robberies, and other crimes, were daily occurrences.

Although Argentina just completed a debt exchange deal involving $102 billion, it cannot access capital markets for new borrowings at reasonable terms.

On the other hand, Brazilian President Lula de Silva saw what was happening in Argentina, and decided not to follow Argentina, its neighbor, and instead adopted an entirely opposite strategy to solve its debt problems. He negotiated a financial bailout package from the IMF, tightened belts and continued servicing its debt.

Now, Brazil's credit has improved and can borrow on better terms than in previous years; it is enjoying an export boom, and foreign investments keep coming into the country. As a result, the local currency is appreciating.

The name of the Argentinean president at the time of default in 2001 is hardly remembered. I think it was De la Rua who was elected President in 2000, and ousted in less than two years in office; whereas, the President of Brazil, Lula de Silva, a labor leader, has become a favorite of the markets and the masses.

Specific strategies to pursue

1. Increase revenues by a) improving tax collection efficiency; b) expanding tax base through tax measures;

2. Rationalize expenditure by a) prioritizing projects for funding b) reengineering government structure;

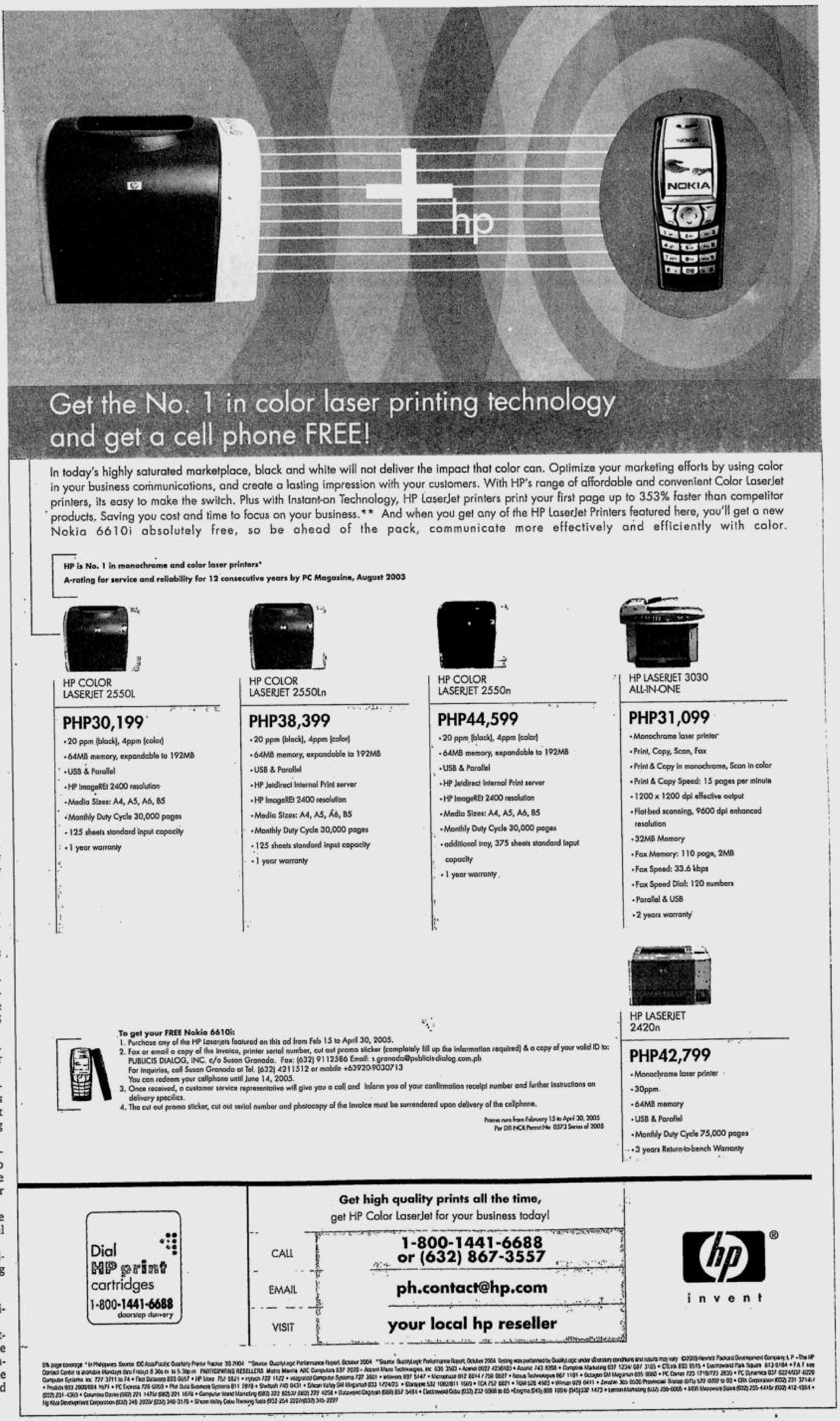
3. Improve debt management by tapping concessional loans; refinancing short term loans, adopting a debt-to-equity program, when appropriate;

4. Pursue an honest-to-goodness privatization program. Non-performing government corporations should be privatized to reduce government subsidy;

5. Improve the environment for investments;

6. Power sector reform with the aim of reducing the mounting losses of NPC and encouraging new investments in the sector to develop new generation capacity to supply the anticipated increase in power requirement of the growing economy.

(This article contains the speech of the author during the special MAP general membership meeting on "Innovative Solutions to the Philippine Debt Problem" on March 11, 2005. The author is Director and Senior Adviser of J. G. Summit Holdings Inc., former Governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and former President of the Philippine National Bank. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)



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Setting up ventures for a few thousands and succeeding

By Joy Yu-Chua
Contributor

OVERSEAS employment is not the only alternative left for Filipinos who want to provide a better life for their families. There is always the option of going into business.

The money spent on placement and processing fees could instead be used to start a small business venture. We can take lessons from the Chinese who have been grabbing at business opportunities for ages.

In Taiwan, some simply push their carts on the streets and peddle an assortment of savory foods, like steamed dumplings, stinky tofu and fresh *lumpia*. At the end of the day, they go home a few thousand Taiwanese dollars richer.

We could also learn from the many ordinary Filipinos who dared to go into entrepreneurship.

Housewife turns restaurateur

There is Cecilia Macainag, a housewife who used her God-given talent to turn misfortunes that came her way into opportunities for success.

The salary of her husband could hardly provide for the needs of their family. The children were forced to quit school. They were seven months behind on their rent.

Such was the bitter reality faced by the Macainags back in 1981, which prompted Cecilia to pawn her remaining treasured possessions for a P1,000.

Using the money as capital, she set up a *karinderia* (cafeteria) in her garage, serving a menu of spaghetti, *palabok*, and *halo-halo* with the help of her three daughters.

When people in the neighborhood dropped by and sampled her *lutong-bahay merienda* (home-cooked snacks), they found her specialties delicious, thus, becoming regulars.

Eventually, Cecilia extended her menu to include viands after the customers' demanded more food choices.

Eleven years later, at the constant prodding of her eldest son, Cecilia finally agreed to expand her *karinderia*.

From their apartment at La Loma, Quezon City, they opened a small restaurant at Banawe and a year later, moved to a more spacious location at Amoranto.

In 1993, they gave the restaurant an official company name, from "Three Ladies Carinderia," "Lutong Bahay," and "Karinderia sa Apartment," which customers dubbed it over the years, to "Ponciana's Kitchen" in honor of Cecilia's mother who handed her the legacy of superior cooking.

The mid-90s saw Ponciana's Kitchen growing even more, with branches at Timog and Greenhills. It recently added the Fairview branch to its network, and the Macainags are looking at putting up even more.

But even without the additional outlets, Cecilia Macainag is already a winner.

Playing her way to success

Lea de Castro's childhood dream was to play the piano. But her parents could not afford to give her lessons. Fortunately, her parish offered free piano tutorials for free that she immediately enrolled in. It was an answer to her prayer.

That began her journey in music, which led to a degree in music education and voice from the Philippine Women's University (PWU) Conservatory of Music in 1985, and, nine years later, Lea De Castro Music Studio, a school for music and the performing arts.

She was only in her sophomore year at PWU when she started giving piano and organ home service sessions at P30 anhour to four-year-olds and older. Her rate eventually went up to P500 anhour depending on the location. When she started giving five lessons a day, Lea decided to teach right at her home. The first recital that she organized was composed of 35 students, which drew a great deal of respect and attention from the audience followed by a considerable increase in enrollment.

The money she earned from her years of teaching went to the construction of a music studio to accommodate the demand. She bought second-hand instruments from surplus shops and rented a space at Imus, Cavite for P4,500 a month, which she later renovated to house four rooms.

Three months later, five more rooms were added to cater to the expanding number of students. After a year, Lea opened a second branch at Kawit, Cavite and in September 2003, a third at Las Piñas.

Because she was able to make a business out of her passion for music and education, the directress confesses to having invitations of expanding abroad. But ever the start-small type of entrepreneur, she would rather commit to a new venture if she's ready financially and administratively.

Lea De Castro Music Studio presently boasts of 500 enrollees with the number multiplying four times during the summertime.

The courses offered are voice, piano, organ, flute, drum, violin and saxophone along with lessons in painting, taekwondo, ballet and personality development.

"Start small, think big." That was the principle that Lea lived by in building her business, which others can take as their own.

Making millions out of a tragedy

When her husband of six years, a manager of a private firm, died in 1990, 26-year-old Sharon Chen was left with just P50,000 in assets: her husband's company death benefit, a second-hand car, some jewelry and household appliances.

She was left with two kids, aged 2 and 5 and practically no savings to depend on. Even when her husband was alive, their earnings just went to household expenses and a few luxuries.

Sharon decided to give up the apartment where the family had lived at downtown Cebu, and moved back to her parents' house in the suburbs. She continued with her full-time job in sales, which paid her a minimum wage of P1,780 a month.

Not one to see herself as a wage-earner all her life, she relearned the Chinese value of saving from her parents and set aside P20,000 to serve as capital for the part-time business she planned to venture into.

With her knack in sales, she began to sell jewelry on an installment basis. As her business grew, she realized the benefits of being an entrepreneur. She not only earned more than she did while working for someone else, she also had opportunities to make even more.

Thus, after recovering her investment in three months, she quit her stable, yet low-paying job and went full-time in her business.

More aggressive on her own, she netted P150,000 in two years. She earned another P150,000 the following year as she became more adept at the business, and her clientele grew.

Two years later, she opened a shop at a nearby commercial area and had a house built two years after.

Realizing the importance of thriftiness the hard way, Sharon had learned to use her money wisely and deposit her savings in the bank. She didn't buy a new car but kept the well-maintained second-hand automobile she shared with her late husband.

She was prudent in buying things that are necessary and reasonably-priced, although there were times that she awarded herself and her family with little pleasures. She didn't acquire assets through loans, but did so when she could afford them.

She has definitely come a long way from the naïve, earn-and-spend employee that she was in the past. The hard lessons in life taught her to work for the money and let money work for her.

What then are the qualities that one should develop to become an entrepreneur? One must be a leader, negotiator and risk-taker, hardworking, persevering, persistent, passionate, innovative, assertive, and possess initiative and integrity.

To start a business, an entrepreneur must have a unique product or service to offer that fills a need in the market.

Secondly, his company earnings should reach his desired profit margins, and the product or service should easily adapt to changing consumer demands.

"What business shall I get into?" is the question people often ask themselves.

Think of what you are interested in. Think of what you are good at. What are the talents or skills that you can make a living from?

People who engage in business take great risks, just as those who are employed abroad. But at least by running a business, the family is intact and the entrepreneurs go through hardships with loved ones at their side.

So, let us not just look at the Chinese as being the natural businessmen. Filipinos can be great at it, too.

Chikka.com hurdles new ISO markers

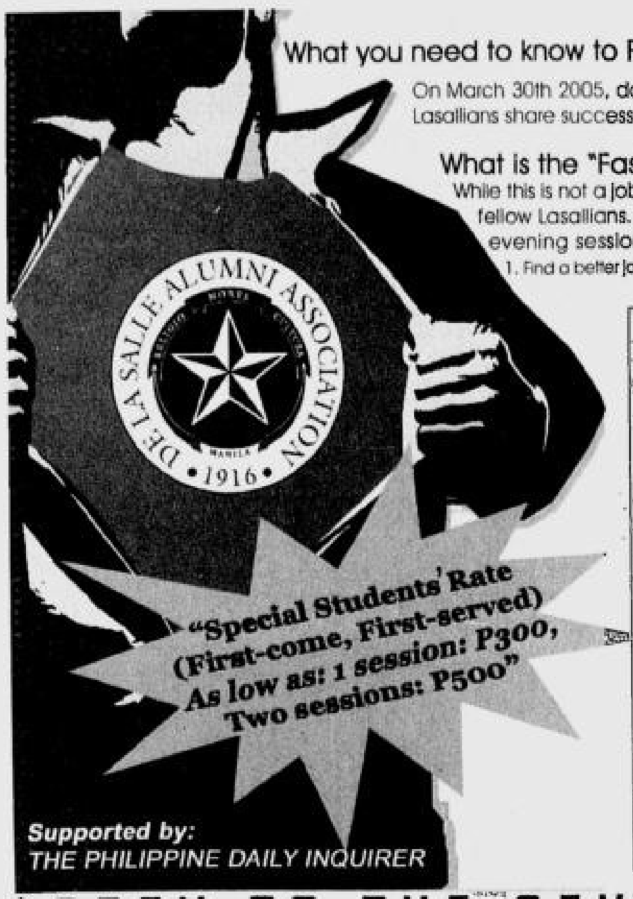
CHIKKA Asia, Inc., creators of the popular Chikka Txt Messenger, recently achieved the new global standards for Information Security Management Systems (BS7799) and IT Services Management Systems (BS15000). Certifying body TUV Product Service Asia Pacific also confirmed that Chikka Asia is first in the world to apply the standards in the areas of "operation of IT infrastructure" and in the "provision of managed IT services in support of design and deployment of wireless software applications services using GSM-SMS and MMS protocols." Chikka earlier revalidated the ISO 9001:2000 standard for Quality Management Systems under the same scope.

"Manila is now a global headquarters for Chikka. The integrated information security, technology management and quality management systems is a requirement for what is now a truly global operation exporting excellent wireless applications that could only have come from The Philippines-still undisputed text capital of the world," said Chito Bustamante, Chikka Asia chief operating officer.

Currently dubbed the SMS capital of the world for producing up to 15 percent of world SMS (short message service) volume, the Philippines has more significantly risen to prominence as a regional center for excellent wireless applications development, thanks to wireless applications developers like Chikka.

In 2001, the company launched a mobile instant messenger that was the first of its kind, marrying popular instant messaging technology popular in the US with "texting" which was the rage in this part of the world. Today, next to email, Chikka claims it is the one Internet-based service that is bringing the largest number of Filipinos together as an on-line community. At any given time, over one million users are chatting between their PCs anywhere in the world and Philippine mobiles.

Leveraging off this "text culture," Chikka has since created multiple platforms that have "text"-enabled every conceivable aspect of Philiippine life, from text-enabled product promos to government "text-hotlines;" from SMS-based showbiz news to interactive TV, matchmaking among prospective dates, to bidding for items up on auction.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What is the "Fast Track Career Forum" all about?

While this is not a job fair, you may use this forum to network with fellow Lasallians. You have a choice of an afternoon or an evening session to exchange views on what it takes to:
1. Find a better job 2. Get a promotion. 3. Have a successful second career.

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS*
Afternoon Session
(Start: 1:30pm End: 4:30pm)
1. Lito Tanjuatco, President - DLSAA
2. Br. Armin A. Luistro, FSC President - DLSU. "Forum Opening Remarks"
3. Rene J. Buenaventura, CEO - Equitable PCIB, Keynote Speaker
4. Ramon Isberto, Head Public Affairs - Smart, "Communicate Effectively or Be Left Behind"
5. Juan Miguel del Rosario, VP HR - Unit. Pulp and Paper Co. Inc., "Have Emotional Inteligence, Have a Great Career"
6. Franz Pumaren, Basketball Coach - DLSU. "Down but Not Out: Career Applications from the 2004 DLSU Basketball Champinship Team"
Evening Session
(Start: 5:00 pm End: 8:00 pm)
1. Dr. Carmelita I. Quebengco, EVP - DLSU, "Opening Remarks"
2. Franco del Rosario, CEO - 6Sigma Consulting, "The Single Biggest Thing That Can Help or Hinder Your Career"
3. James Matti, CEO Ayala ADN, "It is the Minor Details which Lead to the Major League!"
4. Gerard Sanvictores, SGV Partner, "The 3 Musts Executives Look For In Candidates"
5. Boy Martirez, Head Per. Comm. & Mob. Services Smart, "The Fastest Way To Become The Chief Marketing Officer"

*subject to change without prior notice

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WHEN: Wednesday, March 30, 2005
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REGISTRATION DETAILS:
1. Early Bird Rate (payment no later than March 23rd): P600.00 per person per session. An additional P100.00 per person per session discount for group registrations (minimum of 4 persons).
2. Regular rate: P800.00 per person per session.
3. Pay into Standard Chartered Bank Acct No. 0132563148001; Account Name: De La Salle Alumni Association- Liberal Arts Chapter

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E-MAIL: francodelrosario@hotmail.com

*We welcome La Salle alumni interested to be speakers in future career forums. Please e-mail or fax your bio-data to the above contact information.

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- **Brand Positioning:** How to choose a winning proposition
- **Brand Personality:** How to conceive and communicate what your brand represents
- **Brand A&P:** How to have a cost-efficient marketing budget

Day 2
- **Key Account Partnership:** How to influence key retailers to push your brand
- **In-Store Demo:** How to increase closing rate at the point-of-purchase
- **Account-Specific Sales Promo:** How to plan and evaluate promo effectiveness

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Prescriptive versus generic approach to dev't planning

By Nelia Cruz Sarcol
Contributor

THE PEARL Principle advocates believe that perennial problems of the country may be solved by addressing them at source. When we say at source, we really mean on a per province basis or the closest we can get— to be able to solve certain problems. Since policy making is very much influenced by the actual needs of clients who are end-users and beneficiaries of our services, the closest we are to the actual implementers and beneficiaries of a development plan, the more viable and relevant the solution/plan would be. This is not a new strategic approach because most successful private businesses have been using it to better manage the quality of delivery of their products or services. There may be variations in the implementation for private sector and the government but the fundamental principles are still the same and applicable to both.

We do not believe in "generic solutions" to the problems that beset the country. A "shotgun approach" may hit the target, but the splinters may cause harm to the surrounding "by-standers" ... we mean, other neighboring cities, towns and municipalities. Generic solutions should supposedly "kill the enemy" called poverty. Decades have passed, the situation still remains the same, to some localities, it's even worse now.

Poverty amid prosperity

There are prosperous cities in certain provinces but some of the surrounding areas are still disadvantaged, depressed and underserved (DDUs). Even within city enclaves, you can see poor sections within the vicinity of progressive districts or even within a barangay. Examples of these can be found in Manila, Makati and Muntinlupa, among others. Development has not trickled down to the greater majority.

I personally see this situation everyday whenever I turn my chair around and look out through the glass curtain wall of my office on the 28th floor of RCBC Plaza. I look down and I can see the Makati Medical Center, the famed Ayala Avenue, the old, yet, still beautiful, and the upcoming commercial buildings and condos being marketed as very moderno—or should I say, post-modern in design with world-class amenities. But as I move my gaze to a small area right in front of Makati Medical Center—two blocks away from Ayala Avenue... is a group of shanties sticking out like a "severely sore thumb" of a confused society. I say "confused" because I question our role in the continued existence of such maladies.

It is still mind-boggling to see such a scenario in a very progressive city. This small spot that I see from my window is just about 5,000 square meters in size with maybe some families. If the leaders (government and civil society) cannot address such a problem, how else can we solve bigger and more complex issues at hand? The Pearl Principle ideology teaches that change must begin from within and within our spheres of influence.

We should ask ourselves: Have we done enough? Who did we do it for? Who else should benefit from the perceived development that is happening? What can we do now? We must do the right thing.

Use prescriptive approach

The Pearl Principle proposes the use of the Prescriptive Approach as against Generic Approach to Development Planning. The Prescriptive Approach, as it is used in the practice of medicine, would normally comprise of a team of doctors (experts) of different specializations needed to cure the patient. The patient and his family, in modern medicine, are also active participants in determining the course of action of treatments to be done. This is imperative because non-cooperation of the patient and his family may be detrimental to the patient's life. All of them must address the "disease" together. The patient and his family cannot do it by themselves. There is a vital need for the objective expertise of the diagnostic team. The same principles are also recommended as part of the Prescriptive Approach to Development that we have been proposing for quite some time now.

We have been using the Prescriptive Approach in Mentoring start-up businesses since 1998, in the business school which I founded, the CIE Global Colleges. This came about because CIE has been using the Problem Based Learning (PBL) Pedagogy for quite some time now. PBL is also inspired by the way medical doctors are trained. As part of our outreach projects, we are using the PBL-Prescriptive Approach in coming up with a holistic development plan for Tabuelan, a small municipality in the northern part of Cebu, to demonstrate how social entrepreneurship works—not just to our students but as a pilot project of the Pearl Principle EDCs.

In the Tabuelan Project, we sat down with community representatives to discuss and propose the people's vision of Tabuelan. Based on what was discussed, we created a diagnostic team, composed of experts in different fields necessary to advise the Tabuelans as to their course of action to move them closer to their vision.

Now that the Pearl Principle National Movement has been established, we have started to organize our qualified cell groups to form the initial Enterprise Development Centers (Educes) all over the country. This, I believe, is one of the foremost reasons why so many are responding positively to the Pearl Principle National Movement. The role of the EDCs is to provide the provinces with a diagnostic team for Prescriptive Intervention/Approach for peace and progress in the community. The EDCs will be led by young successful entrepreneurs and other experts, depending on the needs of the area, who are willing to lend a helping hand to address the unique needs of these underserved Filipinos and bring about prosperity in their communities.

Here are the activities that the EDCs will engage in:

Encourage entrepreneurship across the country

Advocacy and propaganda

Enterprise development training

Enlistment in SME programs

SME business development

Social entrepreneurship

Reinventing traditional enterprises

Consulting and management support

Bring investments to rural communities

Advocacy and propaganda

Venture capital road shows

Trade fairs in cooperation with other agencies and NGOs

Non-traditional business development

Creation of incubation centers

We have an acronym for this strategy—T.E.A.C.H. Train to the tenets of the Pearl Principle for Peace and Progress Engage people for collective action Assess collective strengths and weaknesses Create opportunities from current problems Hand-holding and advising.

Feedback at ncs.pearl@cie.edu

Shopwise features food and fashion sale

FROM March 16 to April 19, Shopwise's Fresh Off The Rack will feature a weekly tandem of sections from the hypermart's fashion and fresh produce departments simultaneously offering a thematic buffet of great bargain finds.

From March 23 to 26, it will be seafood and swimwear; March 30 to April 5, poultry, meat and men's fashion and accessories; April 6 to 12, fresh produce and intimate apparel; April 13 to 19, bakery and ladies' fashion and accessories. The store will offer discounts of up to 60 percent on selected fashion items and bundling promotions for the fresh food department.

Weekend organic markets will also be set up in all Shopwise branches on all weekends during the promo period, except on the last week, wherein the markets will be open everyday.

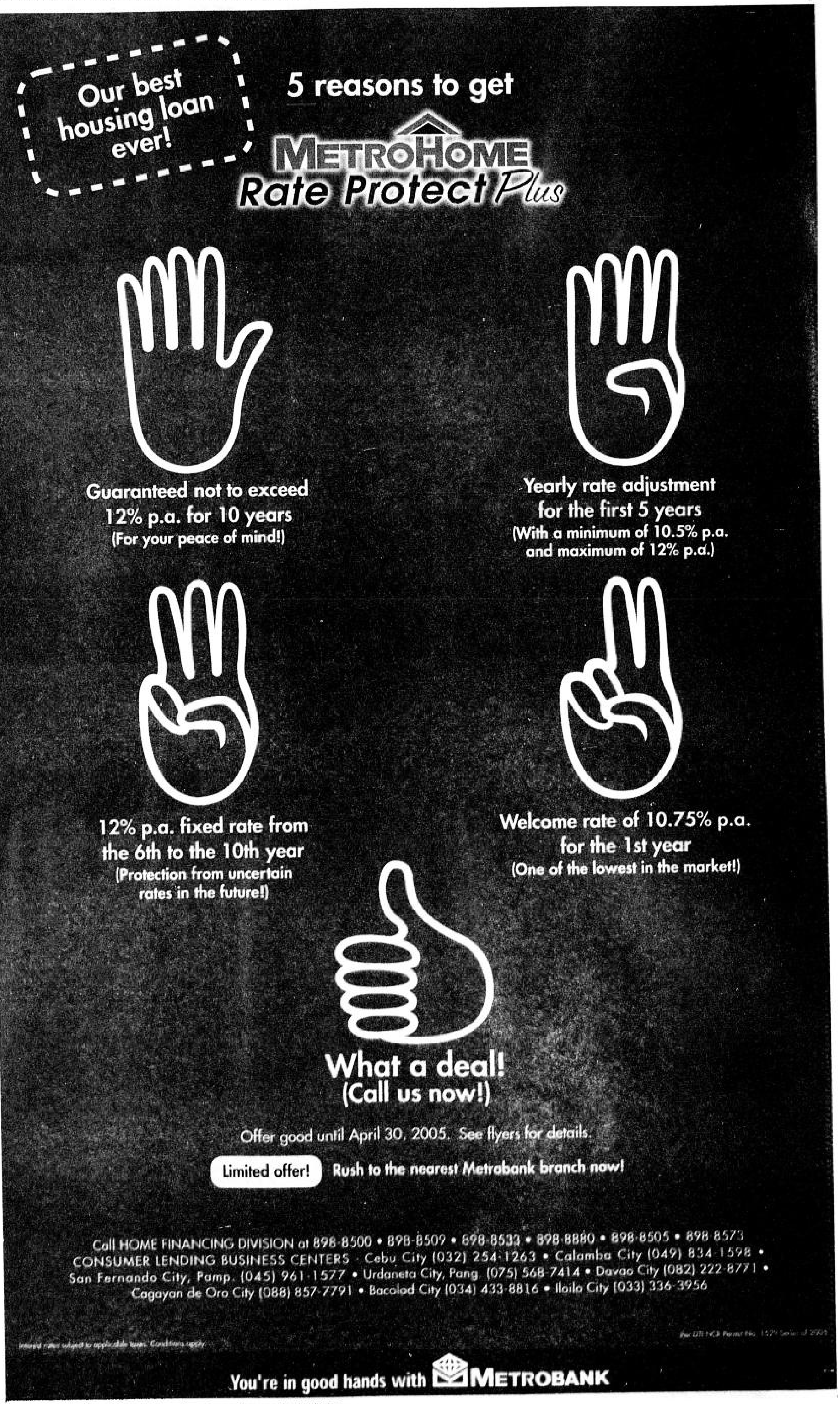
Aside from the sale, shoppers can win their shopping money back with Fresh Off the Rack's one-of-a-kind raffle, open to patrons 18 years and above.

To participate, they just have to buy any Fresh or Fashion item from Shopwise and they automatically qualify for the raffle.

There is no minimum purchase required. As long as they have a Fresh Fashion item in their receipt, they get one raffle coupon. Receipts must be presented to the booth personnel at the branch for validation.

One raffle coupon will be issued for every receipt presented. However Wiseclub members will be given two raffle coupons for every receipt presented.

Deadline for submission of coupons is at 11 p.m. on April 19.



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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Philippine Marketing Association 2005 officers strive towards marketing convergence

THE PHILIPPINE Marketing Association recently inducted its 2005 officers and board of directors at the Hotel Inter-Continental in Makati.

Leading the inductees was its president Donald Lim, who is currently the vice president for marketing of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. He was the association's vice-president for membership, fellowship and sports in 2004.

With this year's theme "Marketing Convergence," PMA will move closer to its vision of becoming a marketing icon of the Philippines.

Jos Ortega, PMA's immediate past president, officially turned over the responsibilities to Lim. He also conferred presidential awards for 2004.

Officers were welcomed to their new posts with a bang as colorful and deafening lion dance and drums and cymbals exhibition added amusement to the event.

SANDY Prieto-Romualdez inspires the new prime movers of PMA

LIM GIVES his first speech as president.

PHILIPPINE Marketing Association 2005 president Donald Lim and its immediate past president Jos Ortega in a turnover ceremony.

National Marketing Convention starts registrations

THE PHILIPPINE Marketing Association announces the start of registration for the 2005 National Marketing Convention slated on May 25 and 26 at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

The two-day annual conference with the theme "Extreme Marketing Challenge: The Road to Convergence" will explore the avenues by which today's marketers can push their brands to the limits, go beyond market expectations and conquer the interests and purchasing powers of their consumers.

International and local marketing authorities have confirmed participation in the event, which is expected to draw in 1500 delegates including marketing and non-marketing professionals, entrepreneurs, members of the academe and students.

Executive vice president Pamela S. Adriano, this year's director in charge of the 36th National Marketing Convention, said that the grand meeting of minds will present the different extreme marketing strategies of the various brands in the market that have successfully fought high waters to survive and win their battles, more than enough to prepare them for the ultimate challenge to convergence.

Topics to be tackled on Day 1 include: Business Philosophy for Extreme Marketing; Pushing Your Limits in a Crisis Economy; The Taste That Conquered the Nation Now Conquers the World; Pain Makes Gains; Pharmaceutical Companies Going Beyond Pain; Shaping the Future of High-Rise Condominiums; and Marketing Superiority Through Super Events.

Meanwhile, Day 2 will feature Mega Formulas for Extreme Marketing from a Marketing Guru; Telecommunications Convergence; Challenge to the Extreme; The Call Center Phenomenon: Converging Global Business Interests; Mall Mania; New Rules in Market Leadership; Success Stories in Non-traditional Bank Marketing; Creativity on the edge; Media and Marketing Convergence; Trends Undiscovered in Advertising and Road to Recovery through Marketing Convergence.

The Philippine Marketing Association is a member of the Asia Pacific Marketing Federation and World Marketing Association. With the theme this year of "Marketing Convergence" the organization prepares marketing professionals to merge traditional and contemporary as well as Eastern and Western thoughts, which in essence is marketing convergence.

Interested parties may avail themselves of the early bird discounted rate of P7,500 from March 16 to April 16. Regular registration from April 17 to May 24 is an option for P8,500. The on-site registration rate is P9,500. PMA members will also have a 10-percent discount. Meanwhile, the rate for members of the academe is P4,500 and government delegates is P5,500.

For inquiries, call the Philippine Marketing Association secretariat at 634-4890; 634-5722; and 636-1451 or e-mail pma@philonline.com.

A TOAST to sowing the right seeds for the next 50 years.

PHILIPPINE Daily Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez inducts PMA's 2005 officers and board of directors: Donald Patrick Lim, president; Pamela Adriano, EVP/director NMC; Lizanne Uychaco, VP-membership; Gina Luengas, VP-chapters; Vivian Faustino, VP-education; Virgilio Ajero, VP-youth and academe; Edith Dychiao, board secretary/director-community affairs; Lilibeth Samonte, treasurer; Ruby Ramores, director-NMM/internal auditor; Alexander Flores, director-meetings and attendance; Arlene Martinez, director-fellowship and sports; Tomas Banguis, director-Agora Awards; Genevieve De Guia, director-corporate communications; lawyer Nicasio Conti, director-government affairs; Cergen Go, chair-ways and means; and Joselito Go, immediate past president.

'Ratsky Night Live!' this April

RATSKY Morato just turned 3 a month ago and celebrated it with a dance party. Adding fun were performances by Randy Santiago, Troy Montero, Nino Alejandro, Popsicles (a new girl group from Dyna Music), Haylo, Schizoflyz and Serenity Band.

Celebrities who were spotted partying were Aubrey Miles, Mickey Ferriols, Jeni Hernandez, Geneva Cruz, Hero Angeles, Joross Gamboa, Heart Evangelista, Angelica Panganiban, Malik, Ketchup, Rockie Gutierrez, Brent Javier, KC Montero and Mico Palanca.

Sponsors that made the party possible were Hortaleza Salon, Bum Equipment, Kolin Home Appliances, Bobson Jeans & Shirts, Stagecraft International, Caterpillar Shoes & Apparel, Leonardo Bags Direct Sales, All Scope Cinema Genset Rental, La Vie El Rose Flowers, Dyna Music, Angie's Cakes, Mega Octagon Security, Waterfalls Distilled Water, Going Straight Salon, Ice Plus, Baang Coffee Morato, Sky Internet, Clickthecity.com, "The Notebook" and "The Chronicles of Riddick" VCD/DVD by C-Interactive, Pro-Sales Marketing, Brewmaster, Jose Cuervo Tequila, Bailey's, J&B Scotch Whiskey, Monster Radio RX 93.1.

And in celebration of the third anniversary, Randy Santiago has prepared a sumptuous repertoire of songs and gags that promises to give the audience a fun-filled evening. Summer starts here as the hit songs of the 80s to the present will surely heat up the dance floor. Joining him is his band Serenity and other special guests. The party never stops on April 15 and 16 at Ratsky Cebu and April 9, 23 and 30 at Ratsky Malate.

"Ratsky Night Live" is presented by Dickies Jeans USA. For ticket inquiries, call Ratsky Malate at 523-8608 to 10, Ratsky Cebu at 032-2342113, or Ratsky Morato at 3739881 to 83.

MIRANT LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM LAUNCHED

Officials of Mirant Philippines and the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) sign a memorandum of agreement launching the Mirant Leadership Fellows Program, a partnership under the AIM-Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides. The program will select 10 individuals who will undergo a specialized two-year fellowship program designed by AIM that will increase the capacity of bridging leaders to achieve their leadership goals within the context of societal divides, with the objective of bringing prosperity and development to Mindanao. Shown are (from left) professor Ernie Garilao, executive director of the center, professor Vicky Licuanan, dean of AIM, Bobby Calingo, executive director of the Mirant Philippines Foundation (MPF) and Ricky de Castro, program manager, MPF. The program seeks leaders in civil society, public service or the private sector with at least five years of development work Nomination forms and additional information can be obtained from the AIM-Mirant center website (www.mirant.aim.edu.ph). Interested parties can also call 892-4011 local 2123 for more information.

ProductFILES

Innovative lighting by Xenon

SINCE most original or replacement halogen automotive bulbs are expensive, consumers are on the lookout for a dependable and reliable automotive lighting technology.

If you've had one too many replacement halogen bulbs for your car, maybe it's time to try High Intensity Discharge (HiD) Xenon bulbs. This innovative lighting technology is growing in popularity due to its increased nighttime illumination and high quality. Xenon bulbs are similar in performance to halogen bulbs, with slightly different criterion.

Some of the benefits of Xenon bulbs include a longer life span than halogen light bulbs, they burn cooler, emit no harmful UV rays, can be handled with bare hands and shine twice as bright as halogen bulbs. Many older cars come equipped with frosted tungsten sealed beam headlights and these can, at some expense, be converted to xenon to improve driving at night. Stock bulb headlights can be replaced directly with Xenon HID replacement bulbs. These bulbs work at high performance ratios, which make xenon an OEM equipment of high-end European and Japanese luxury cars.

Shown is an Acura Integra Type R equipped with a Xenon HID kit. HID kits are also available for cars, SUVs, AUVs and sport bikes.

Xenon HiD systems are locally distributed by Hummer Philippines Inc. For inquiries, call 713-1998, 0917-830-7832 or visit the Xenon showroom at 318 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, or log on to www.xenon-bulbs.com.

Bits & Clips

Trinity College's 43rd grad rites

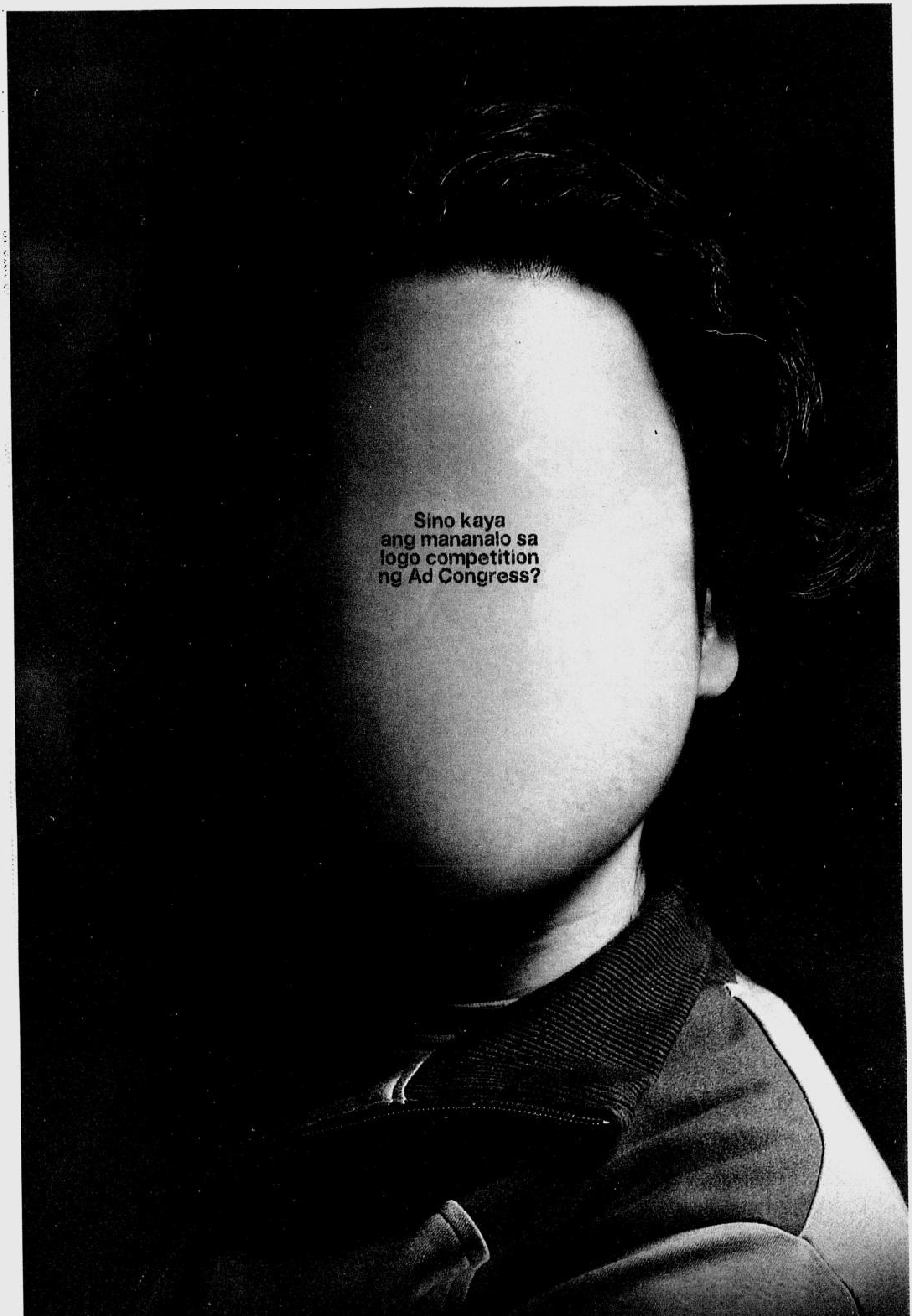
TRINITY College celebrates its 43rd commencement exercise with Rep. Ma. Angelica Rosedell Amante as guest speaker. This year's graduation rites will be held on March 28 at 8 a.m. at the reception Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC). Trinity College has been named one of the top five performing schools of Nursing by the Professional Regulations Commissions (PRC). The school garnered a 95-percent passing rate in the June 2004 Licensure Examination for Nursing. It also reaped 2nd and 8th place in the March 2004 Medical Technology Licensure Examination and 17th place in the September 2004 licensure examination. Trinity College of Quezon City is run by the Episcopal Church of the Philippines. The College offers baccalaureate degrees in liberal arts, business administration, education, nursing and medical technology as well as post- graduate degrees in education. All programs are duly accredited by Paascu and Acscu-AAI.

Disney auditions in Manila

AWARD-WINNING composer Ryan Cayabyab recently announced that Walt Disney Entertainment talent casting representatives will be in Manila March 30 to April 1 searching for dancers, character performers and singers. In its continuing partnership with the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing Arts, Walt Disney Entertainment will be holding auditions for singers to perform at Hong Kong Disneyland scheduled to open later this year. Deadline of completion of all application forms and requirements is at 6 p.m. on March 28 at the SMFPA. All applicants must be at least 18 years old. For more information, call Deo Dipasupil at 632-3769, or log on to www.smfpa.com. For more information concerning Hong Kong Disneyland, log on to www.hongkongdisneyland.com.

Documentary Stamp Tax symposium

JOAQUIN Cunanan & Co, the Philippine member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers, will conduct a symposium that looks into the Documentary Stamp Tax (DST) regulation recently issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The symposium will be held on March 30, 2 to 6 p.m. at the Quezon A Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City. During the symposium, seasoned tax professionals from the firm will address issues, and attempt to resolve controversies surrounding the DST. Interested parties can call 459-2044 for inquiries. PricewaterhouseCoopers (www.pwc.com) provides industry-focused assurance, tax and advisory services for public and private clients.



The 19th Philippine Advertising Congress needs a new logo!

Theme: READY FOR THE WORLD!?

Ready for the World!? Ito ba'y isang katanungan o sagot? Do we have the ideas?
Can we match wits with the world's best creative minds? Your logo must capture the spirit of the crossroads that the theme presents.

Kung nahuli mo ang tema, ₱20,000 ay para sa iyo!

What's the brief?

The logo must have the following elements:
1. The theme line: Ready for the World!?
2. The event: The 19th Philippine Advertising Congress
3. The punctuation marks "?" and "!" are mandatory

How do I submit?

1. Submit all entries to the Adboard 19th PAC office, 7th floor Dao I Condominium, 189 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. For inquiries, call 812-0086 or 813-0089.
2. You can also e-mail your entries to 19thadcongress@gmail.com
3. Deadline for submission is on March 30, 2005

Give it time

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

MERGING on to a crowded expressway can unnerve even the calmest driver.

But despite the stress, most of us just check our mirror and cautiously forge ahead, hoping that the hole we're shooting for remains open until our vehicle has safely entered the highway.

We obey the yield sign on the ramp, but we keep moving.

Every once in a while, motorists will make it all the way to the end of the ramp and just stop. Other drivers line up behind them, honking and gesturing, but the poor drivers are too intimidated by all the 18-wheelers and SUVs whizzing past to make their move.

Instead of slowing down until they find the right spot to merge, they just give up.

Have you ever been tempted to do that in other areas of life? Have you ever gotten so discouraged by the pressures, responsibilities, or lack of progress associated with a certain project or role that you just want to throw in the towel?

Wanting to surrender and actually giving up are two totally different things. Sometimes, when you're thinking about quitting, a fresh perspective on time can help renew your spirits and energize you for the long haul.

Here are five thoughts that might encourage you the next time you find yourself coming to a standstill in your work as a leader.

1. Wrong perception causes many people to quit.

The moment one person says, "I give up," someone else is looking at the very same situation and saying, "This is my great opportunity."

One person's yelling "uncle" and getting out of the ring, and the other is saying, "This is the chance of a lifetime." What's the difference between the two? It's all a matter of perception.

2. If you start for the wrong reason, you'll stop for the wrong reason.

When people tell me they want to stop doing something, I always want to know why they started it in the first place. Instead of listening to a list of five reasons why they should quit their profession, for example, I take them back to the beginning.

Why did they get into accounting (or construction or sales or whatever) at all? Did they love numbers, or did they just become CPAs because that's what their parents expected? If you have the right reason for starting something, you'll have the tenacity to give it a little more time.

3. Perseverance and patience are a result of seeing the big picture.

Let me explain it this way. A stonecutter, hammer and chisel in hand, pounds on a hunk of granite. For a long time, there's no obvious change in the stone, but he keeps tapping the chisel.

And then, on the 101st tap, a hairline crack appears. Does the 101st blow make the fracture? Of course not. It's the constant hammering on the chisel that causes the rock to split. The stonecutter knows what will happen if he keeps pounding. He perseveres because he sees the big picture.

In work and life, many people give up when they don't get immediate results. They hit the chisel about three times, and then they quit because they don't think anything is happening; but they're wrong.

When you're doing the right thing daily, something is happening even when you can't see it. Don't lose sight of the big picture.

4. Great accomplishments take great time.

The sculptor who carved Mount Rushmore was once asked if he did a perfect job of sculpting the faces of the four presidents. "No," he replied. "The nose of George Washington is about an inch too long, but it's okay. In a thousand years, erosion will make it just right."

Talk about a good perspective on time. He understood that great achievements don't happen overnight.

Sometimes, you have to wait a long time to see the results of your hard work.

5. Some things only work out if given enough time.

I once read an article in Golf magazine about the late Sam Snead.

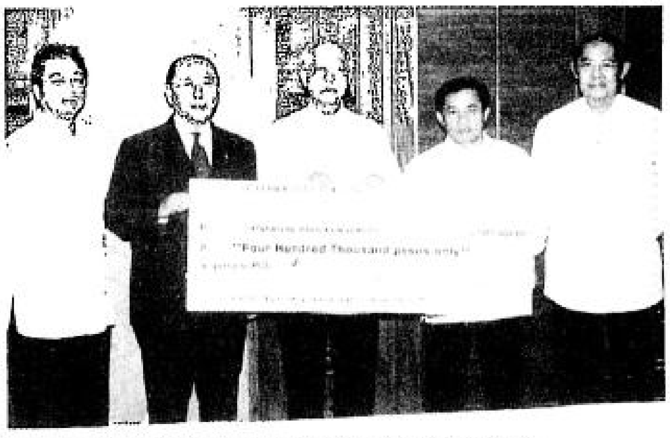
A person who had played golf with Snead recalled that when the legendary golfer made a triple bogey (three over par) on the first hole, it didn't seem to bother him.

As he was walking off the green, Sneed looked at his partner and said, "That's why they have 18 holes of golf." In other words, it will all work out in the end. Some things just take time.

It's easy to put too much stock in a single event. It's not one meeting, one lecture, or one presentation that makes us into great leaders; it's the process. It's the time we spend day in and day out—working diligently even when we're not seeing any results—that makes the difference.

So next time you're tempted to give up, remember this. Leaders develop daily, not in a day. Give it time.

Send your comments or questions to Dr Maxwell c/o slvguru@pldtDSL.net



"Four Hundred Thousand pesos only"

PCI LEASING SUPPORTS KALINGA LUZON
PCI Leasing & Finance Inc., a subsidiary of Equitable PCIBank, recently turned over a check for P400,000 to the Ateneo de Manila University and Gawad Kalinga in support of "Kalinga Luzon." Kalinga Luzon, a project undertaken by the DSWD, Ateneo de Manila, Red Cross and ABS-CBN in partnership wtih Gawad Kalinga, was formed in response to last year's calamities caused by Typhoons Winnie and Yoyong which devastated towns in the provinces of Quezon, Aurora, Nueva Ecija and Oriental Mindoro. It aims to go beyond relief stage and work out an effective program to rehabilitate and rebuild affected communities in Luzon. Photo shows Gawad Kalinga administration and finance head Mike Goco, EPCIBank board member Roberto Romulo, Ateneo president Fr. Bienvenido F. Nebres SJ, PCI Leasing president Manolo Arzadon, and Ateneo VP for finance Jose M. Santos

Xda II mini

O2

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The Xda II mini is small in size, but big on features. It has a vibrant 2.8" 65K-colour TFT-LCD screen. Contained within compact dimensions is a full-featured office suite for all your business needs.
There is also an Internet browser, MSN® Messenger and Windows Media® Player, so you can surf, chat with friends, or download and enjoy the latest games and MP3 tunes anytime you want.
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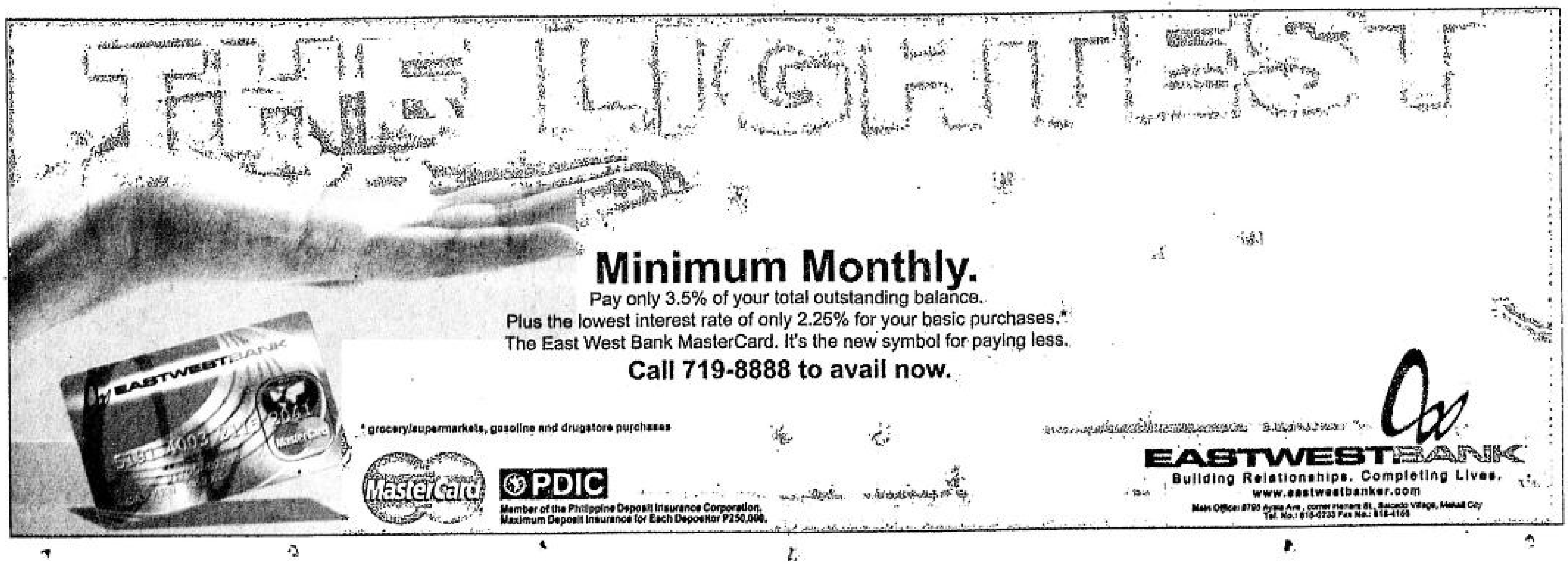

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BUSINESS*Monday*

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

'Istiv' helps improve SME productivity

THE PROGRAM name stands for the five ideal attributes of a productive person—industrious, systematic, time-conscious, innovative and strong value for work. In short Istiv.

The National Wages and Productivity Commission, an agency of the Department of Labor and Employment tied up with 19 big corporations to assist 50 viable small and medium-scale suppliers that could benefit from its Istiv productivity improvement program.

The participants of the Big Enterprise, Small Enterprise program implemented with the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) and the Technology Application and Promotion Institute (Tapi) of the Department of Science and Technology include Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., Ford Motor Philippines, Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Philippine Auto Component, Philippine Batteries Inc. and Yutaka Manufacturing Phils. Inc.

Also Nestlé Philippines Inc., Unilever Foods Philippines and San Miguel Packaging Products, exporters of semiconductor and electronic components like Integrated Microelectronics Inc., SCG Philippines Inc., Fujitsu Ten Corp. of the Philippines, and Takanichi Philippines Corp., Smart Communications Co. Inc., Jollibee Foods Corp., YKK Philippines Inc., Philippine Carpet and Express Commissary Inc.

The Istiv productivity improvement program has three modules—orientation for owners, a three-day training session for managers and a one-day training program for workers.

Before and after 5S

BEFORE
AFTER

THE PROGRAM stands for the five ideal attributes of a productive person. It has three modules—orientation for owners, training session for managers, training program for workers. Photos show the changes in Wellmae Motors & Dev't. Corp. after Istiv.

The participating companies will be required to formulate their productivity improvement programs, the implementation of which will be closely monitored by NWPC in the next six months.

"Our experience shows that the commitment of the owners are crucial in the success of any productivity improvement program," said Ciriaco A. Lagunzad III, NWPC executive director. "We have had encouraging experiences all over the country."

Below are the experiences of five beneficiaries of Istiv:.

Machine shop in Cebu

Philip Tan, owns Wellmade Motors and Development Corp.

His machine shop in Tipolo, Mandaue City re-manufactures metal component parts, and provides specialized services such as on-site machining and hot or cold fusion welding. His main problem, common among SMEs, was frequent tardiness of his workers.

After both owner and workers have gone through NPWC'S Istiv sessions, Tan computed the lost annual earnings due to tardiness of each employee. He also quantified the business lost by the company because of their inability to deliver on time.

To solve the problem, he and his workers devised a "punctuality tracking system" where they computed the tardiness of each employee at the end of each week, month and year.

The workers contributed an agreed amount for every minute of tardiness to their Employees Welfare Fund while the management would put in an equivalent of 50 percent of the workers contribution as its counterpart.

The results were encouraging—the total tardiness of the company's 60 workers dropped from 24,205 minutes in 1999 to 2,954 minutes in 2000 and to a negligible level by 2001.

Aside from meeting their work schedules, the company reduced overtime by 50 percent and increase sales revenues by 14 percent.

They eventually agreed to get rid of the bundy clock and instead, each worker now fills up a daily time record based on honesty.

Last year, Wellmade Motors opened a branch in Cebu City, obtained an ISO-9001 certification and was awarded by the Department of Trade and Industry as the Best of the Best Outstanding Consumer Welfare Company.

Furniture maker in Zambales

Walch Furniture and Home Furnishing Company, a leading furniture maker in San Antonio, Zambales owned by Walmin Chen Sr. used to supply furniture to the families of servicemen in the US bases.

During its heydays, Walch employed as many as 200 workers.

Walch's market and factory disintegrated with the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo followed by the pull out of the US military bases in the early 1990s.

But that did not stop the enterprising businessman to start anew and attract the attention of families living in Metro Manila's posh subdivisions.

Orders kept on coming. Eventually Chen felt the need to improve his operations and availed of NPWC's Istiv services in 2003 to help him redesign his plant layout, improve his work processes, install a management control system and instill among his workers the importance of productivity.

The improved plant layout facilitated greater efficiency and minimized unnecessary movement of workers and materials in the process.

The big white board where Walch used to track job orders, deliveries and receivables and the stick-on notes containing instructions were eliminated.

Appropriate recording and reporting forms, including stock cards and item tags for the company's products were designed. With the implementation of its 5S on housekeeping program, Walch production area became cleaner and a more pleasant place to work in.

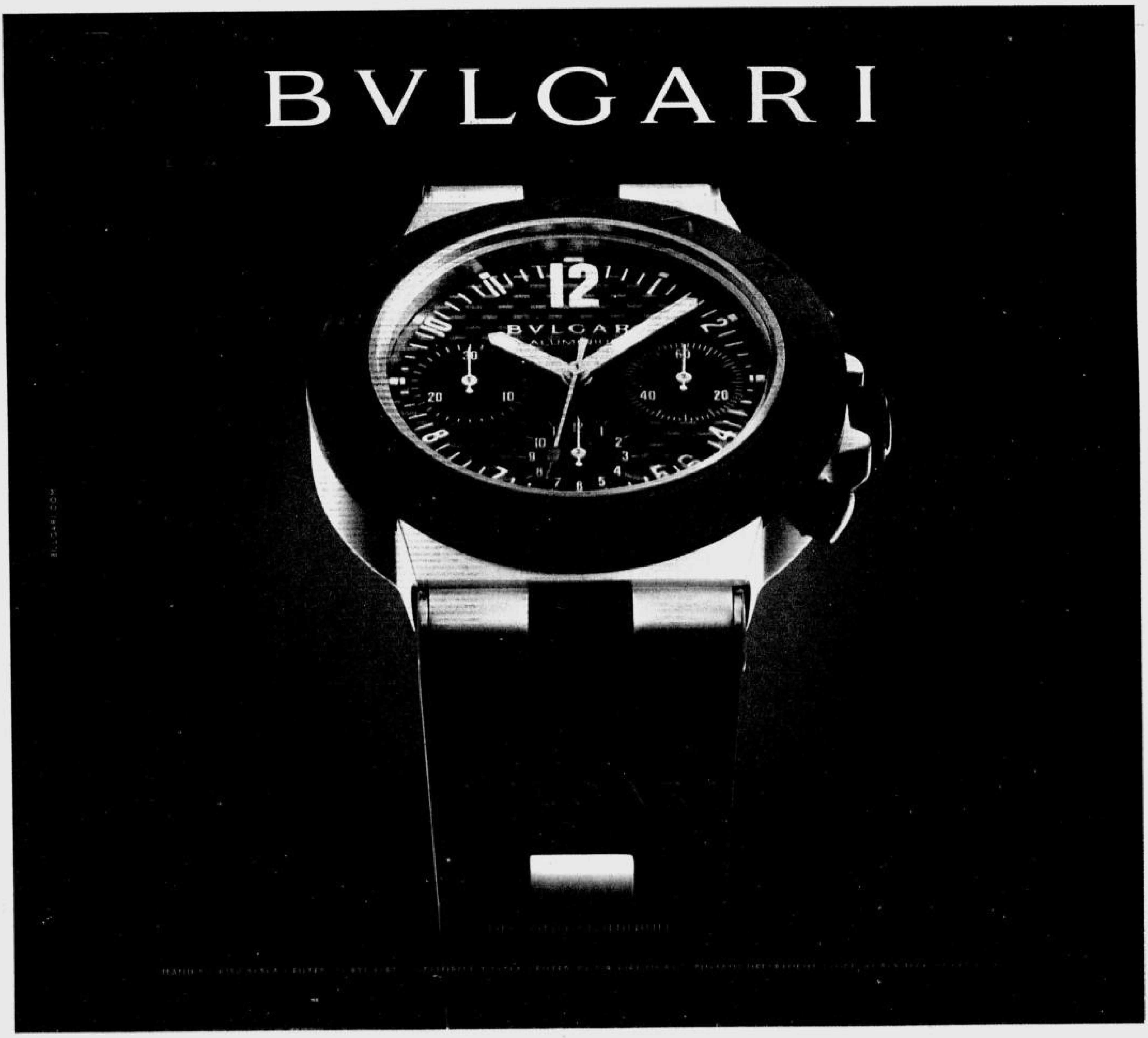
The positive impact was immediately seen in the workers' output. The 30 day production time for a cabinet—which was done by two carpenters, one carver, one sander and two varnishers—was reduced from 20 to 25 days.

The company, now managed by Walmin Chen's son, is a consistent best seller in the various furniture trade fairs in Metro Manila. The company is also starting to export some of its products to the United States.

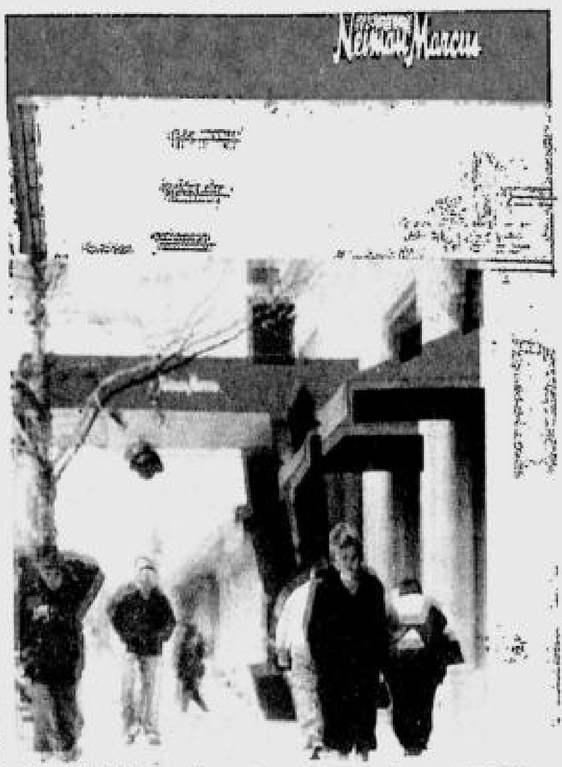
Food processor in Cagayan de Oro

SLERS Industries, Inc., a food processor based in Cagayan de

ISTIV/ B3-2



Americans go for luxury as mass affluence grows


NEIMAN Marcus department store, whose name has become synonymous with luxury shopping, is considering putting itself up for sale. AP

NEW YORK—Conspicuous consumption is back, but luxury goods makers could find themselves with a glut of designer purses and deluxe mobile phones if Americans lose their urge to splurge.

More companies are rolling out high-end goods—a market that includes everything from $69 margaritas at Chicago's swanky Nine Steakhouse to $5,500 Viking refrigerators for the well-appointed home kitchen to $30,000 platinum-encased cell phones from Nokia unit Vertu.

One of the most coveted items is DaimlerChrysler's DCXGn.DE custom-designed Maybach car, whose fine leather-and-wood-trimmed interior resembles a living room. With a price tag of more than $300,000, though, there are only about 400 of these cars on US roads.

Products like these are debuting as affluence is becoming more widespread, thanks in part to baby boomers who have reached their peak earnings years.

The net wealth of US households hit record levels at the end of 2004, bolstered by rising real estate prices and an improved stock market, according to the Federal Reserve.

But that doesn't guarantee a continued upswing in premium product sales.

A major downturn in the economy could hurt the luxury market. There is also the risk of oversaturation as more marketers pile in, leaving little room for makers of copycat products without strong brand identities.

"There will be intensifying competition because, for obvious reasons, this is a high-margin area—that's why everyone likes to get in it," said Bill Hummer, chief economist at Wayne Hummer Investments in Chicago." If there is an oversupply, the margins will drop sharply and some players will withdraw from the market." Fueling much of the growth are the "mass affluent"—people who are not super rich, but who enjoy extravagances like $500 suede satchels from Coach Inc. or $690 day spa visits to Mandarin Oriental luxury hotels.

These consumers would probably be the first to cut back on discretionary spending if they lost their jobs or their stock portfolios took a big hit, economists say.

"Luxury is no longer confined to the affluent," said Lynn Franco, director of the Conference Board research group's consumer research center. But if the economy goes downhill, "those at the lower end of the luxury scale might be more impacted."

In the early 1990s recession, sales of high-end treats like Beluga caviar and Cartier watches languished. After the 2000 stock crash and the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, luxury retailers like Tiffany & Co. Inc. reported sales slumps.

Favorable trends

Barring an economic catastrophe, economists see continued strong demand for luxury goods, propelled by long-term trends such as more women in the work force and smaller families.

Affluent households, with annual earnings of, at least $100,000, should number more than 20 million by 2010, up 32 percent from 2004, according to the Conference Board.

Many baby boomers aged 40 to 60 are sitting on ample savings from inheritances, 401k retirement plans and investment income.

Soaring home values in many US markets also have helped create a sense of prosperity, with gains from real estate far outpacing those of stocks.

Sales of "new luxury" items, like gourmet foods and high-end hotel visits, could hit $1 trillion by 2010, up from $525 billion last year, according to forecasts from Boston Consulting Group.

Companies benefiting from the boom include European luxury goods maker LVMH and department store owner Neiman Marcus Group Inc., which has enjoyed six consecutive quarters of double-digit sales increases at stores open more than a year. The retailer said earlier this week it was considering a possible sale of the company.

While more companies may be eyeing the luxury business, the market is getting crowded, said Michael Silverstein, a senior vice president at Boston Consulting Group. He sees Coach as particularly hard to beat in the accessories area, citing the strength of its brand.

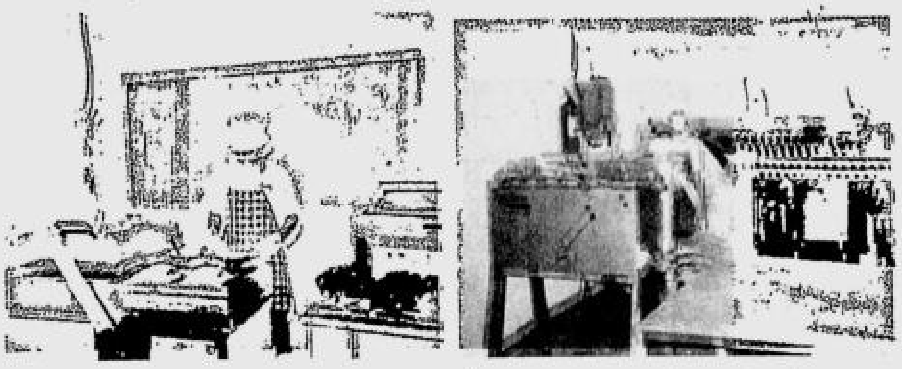
"A lot of people are attempting to compete with Coach, but nobody is able to really compete," he said.

Premium vodka is another area that may not have room for more competitors.

Brands like Grey Goose, Ketel One and Belvedere have developed loyal followings, with bottles selling in the pricey $35 range, but Silverstein wonders if the market can support newer versions that cost even more.

For its part, the maker of one new premium vodka brand says it is doing just fine. Allied Domecq Plc's Stolichnaya late last year created Stoli Elit, which sells for $59.99 a bottle. A company spokesperson declined to give sales figures, but said demand for the new product has been exceeding expectations.

Reuters


SLERS, a Cagayan de Oro-based meat processor invested in new equipment after the program.

'Istiv' helps improve . . .

From page B3-1

Oro produces one of Mindanao's leading local brands, Jamon de Cagayan.

When its owner, Mercedes Pelaez-Mejia availed of the Istiv program in 2000, her operations were saddled with poor equipment maintenance, inadequate cold storage facilities, and high product wastage. To encourage better understanding on the concept of productivity among her 29 workers, the company adopted the program they called "Advance with People, Advance with Attitude."

One of the measures introduced under Istiv was regular monthly meetings between management and workers.

Istiv resource persons conducted briefings on the concept of 5S, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) that set the quality standards on food handling and safety particularly among exporters.

The company eventually got rid of its old chest freezers and invested in walk-in cold storage facilities that had bigger capacities and better controls in setting appropriate temperatures to assure the best quality for its meat products.

SLERS benchmarked its packaging with foreign food products and invested in a vacuum packaging machine, which enabled the food processor to produce processed meats with quality and packaging comparable to expensive imported products.

From 200 kilos per man-day, SLERS' productivity went up 50 percent to 300 kilos per man-day and its gross sales increased by 21 percent.

Boneless bangus exporter in Pangasinan

Another food processor that benefited from Istiv program is Anjo Farms, an exporter of boneless bangus operating in San Fabian, Pangasinan.

When its general manager, Jose Enrique Tanjangco, agreed to work with NWPC's team, they identified three main areas of improvement—management control system, compliance to GMP and HACCP, and instill the Istiv attributes to its workers.

To improve its management control system, the management conducted regular meetings with the company's 69 workers. Work control forms were introduced to generate information needed for decision-making and process and product control standards were strictly enforced.

Anjo Farms also improved its facilities and was able to obtain an HACCP certification from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and Halal certification from the Office of Muslim Affairs.

With workers who can debone a *bangus* in one minute and 28 seconds, Anjo Farms' production increased from 2,000 to 4,000 pieces per day without adding a new production line and with minimal increase in the number of workers.

Machine utilization improved from 75 to 100 percent while power consumption was reduced significantly. With better planning and coordination, raw material shortages were minimized.

The workers now operate their own canteen. Management provided them with individual lockers and a staff house where they can rest particularly on rainy days or when production is running on two shifts.

Average take home pay increased from P4,800 a month in 2002 to P7,200 in 2004. Tanjangco is confident his workers will continue to reap additional benefits from sustained productivity improvements.

Anjo Farms was awarded the Excellence in Export Golden Shell Award in 2002, Most Outstanding SME in Aqua Culture Industry and the Gawad Kapatid award by Ecop in 2003. It is exporting to US, Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, Australia, Canada and Sweden.

Coconut coir processor in Bicol

Dr. Bo, or Justino R. Arboleda used to be a dean in one of Bicol's engineering colleges until he decided to pursue the commercialization of his research on coconut by-products. Leaving the academy to venture into business, Dr. Bo organized Juboken Enterprises—derived from the names of his wife, Julie, Dr. Bo and their son, Ken—which incidentally, according to Dr. Bo, is also a Japanese word meaning "important adventure."

Coconut husks, which were often left by farmers to rot, were decorticated. Dr. Bo developed out of the coconut fibers various products—coco-pots for seedlings, poles for orchids, liners on wire baskets to hold the soil for hanging plants, ropes and car upholstery.

The sawdust is compacted to become cocopeat bricks that are now used to improve the quality of the garden soil. Its main product is a biodegradable geotextile, a mat made from coconut husk fibers that is used as anti-soil erosion material. The geotextile has promising market potentials in China.

When he started Juboken, Dr. Bo was the president-salesman-supervisor-driver rolled into one while Julie was the treasurer. Six skilled undergraduates were hired and as Dr. Bo's business grew, they were promoted and are now supervisors and managers.

What started as a family adventure is now a community enterprise. Juboken now has 49 employees and its production is augmented by the output of 900 families in Albay who are doing piece work for the company. Aside from big companies like the Philippine National Oil Corp. (PNOC), Miescor and Cocotech, Juboken also supplies SM and exports to Germany, Japan and Switzerland.

By this time, Dr. Bo is spending more time in Manila marketing his products while his managers handle the day-to-day operations in Albay.

As his business grew, he started experiencing the usual problems in the plant site—inadequate skills of the workers, high raw material losses, poor employee attitude towards work and strong market competition.

Faced with mounting production problems, Juboken employees as well as Dr. Bo went through Istiv sessions in October 2002.

The improvements were immediately felt. Sales for the second semester of 2002 was 75 percent higher than the first semester's while Juboken was able to double its production output without having to hire new employees. By achieving better raw materials management and zero wastage, Juboken's cost of production dropped 12 percent.

Dr. Bo now holds his "weekend coffee breaks" in Albay where he meets his employees from 4 to 6 p.m. to discuss production targets, analyze problems, brainstorm on issues and possible solutions, draw up incentives schemes and check the employees' and the company's performance.

By September 2003, the company gave a 15th month pay as incentive to the employees for meeting their production targets. His employees are increasingly getting involved in the decision making process.

Wellmade, SLERS, Anjo Farms, Walch and Juboken are among the 1,600 small and medium scale, family-owned business that were assisted by NWPC's Istiv program., through which over 30,000 company owners, managers and workers had been trained during the past six years.

COCOFIBER nets and bio-logs are placed on the slope by a Juboken employee to prevent erosion.

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MOVEMENTS

AIM announces new dean

THE BOARD of Trustees of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) announces the appointment of Victoria S. Licuanan as dean for a five-year term effective March 1, 2005.

Since 1978, Licuanan taught and occupied several administrative posts at the AIM, including most recently that of associate dean for faculty and academic affairs. As dean, she now plans to continue with efforts to renew the institute's commitment to making a truly significant contribution to firms and organizations in Asia, thereby making a difference in sustaining the growth of Asian societies.

In her vision statement, Licuanan states that AIM's continuing management education mission is to develop successful, socially responsible professional leader-managers.

She sees the AIM graduate as both a leader sensitive to Asian cultural, ethical and social requirements as well as a manager who thinks rigorously and creatively, with a mastery of business management tools and the ability to act effectively across managerial disciplines and cultures.

She explains that the challenge to AIM is to continue being relevant to the practitioner manager in the increasingly complex and dynamic Asian environment.

She believes that AIM's distinctive competence will continue to be its leadership in practitioner-centered Asian management education.

Licuanan took her doctoral studies (ABD) in Economics at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she specialized in monetary and international economics. She attended Harvard University under a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship, a Harvard University Fellowship and an Earhart Foundation Fellowship. She graduated magna cum laude with a degree in Business Management from Maryknoll College.

Insular promotes four execs

INSULAR Life chair and CEO Vicente R. Aylion recently announced the promotion of the following executives: Henry A. Pagulayan to senior assistant vice president, Hoagy P. Arriola, Lauro G. Concepcion and Enrico L. Cordoba to assistant vice presidents.

Pagulayan joined Insular Life in 1990. His stint in the company's sales operations group began when he headed the then newly created Cauayan district office which became one of the rising sales offices in the whole of then north east Luzon region. He currently heads north Luzon region, and is credited for the region's exceptional showing for the past two years, even winning the Luzon sales division's Region of the Year award in 2003. He is a BS in Business Administration graduate of Isabela Colleges in Cauayan, Isabela.

Arriola is seconded to Insular Life's health maintenance organization subsidiary, Insular Life Health Care (I-Care) Inc. as head of marketing operations. He joined Insular Life in 1982, and 11 years later, was seconded to I-Care. He is a BS in Business Administration graduate of the Philippine Christian University.

Concepcion is the regional manager of Insular Life's Metro East Regional Office. He joined the firm in 1981. He holds a BS in Applied Economics degree from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

Cordoba is the executive assistant to the chair of the board and CEO and concurrent head of corporate planning staff. He has been with the firm since 1992. He earned his degree in BS Mathematics from the University of Sto. Tomas.

Webworks OS announces appointment

WEBWORKS OS chief executive officer Joey Gurango recently announced the appointment of Manuel "Manny" D. Tanseco as the local software engineering services firm's production manager.

Tanseco will be in charge of the operational management of Webworks OS' commercial software engineering team that will oversee the efficient delivery of software products to clients. His responsibility is to make sure that the company meets customer expectations on schedule and to ensure that products are within budget and of the highest quality.

The production manager is one of the three senior management positions that report directly to the CEO. Appointments to the two other positions—business development manager and engineering manager—will be announced soon.

"We are extremely privileged to have Manny on the Webworks OS team. His expertise in business application software will be integral to our development work as we continue to enhance our product development processes this year," said Gurango.

Tanseco has substantial experience in the development and implementation of business application software, particularly the Microsoft Business Solutions (MBS) suite of products. He was an MBS consultant in charge of financial, supply chain and distribution, manufacturing, personnel, project accounting, and field service modules while concurrently heading the technical services group and participating in pre-sales presentations.

Tanseco graduated with a degree in industrial management engineering from the De La Salle University.

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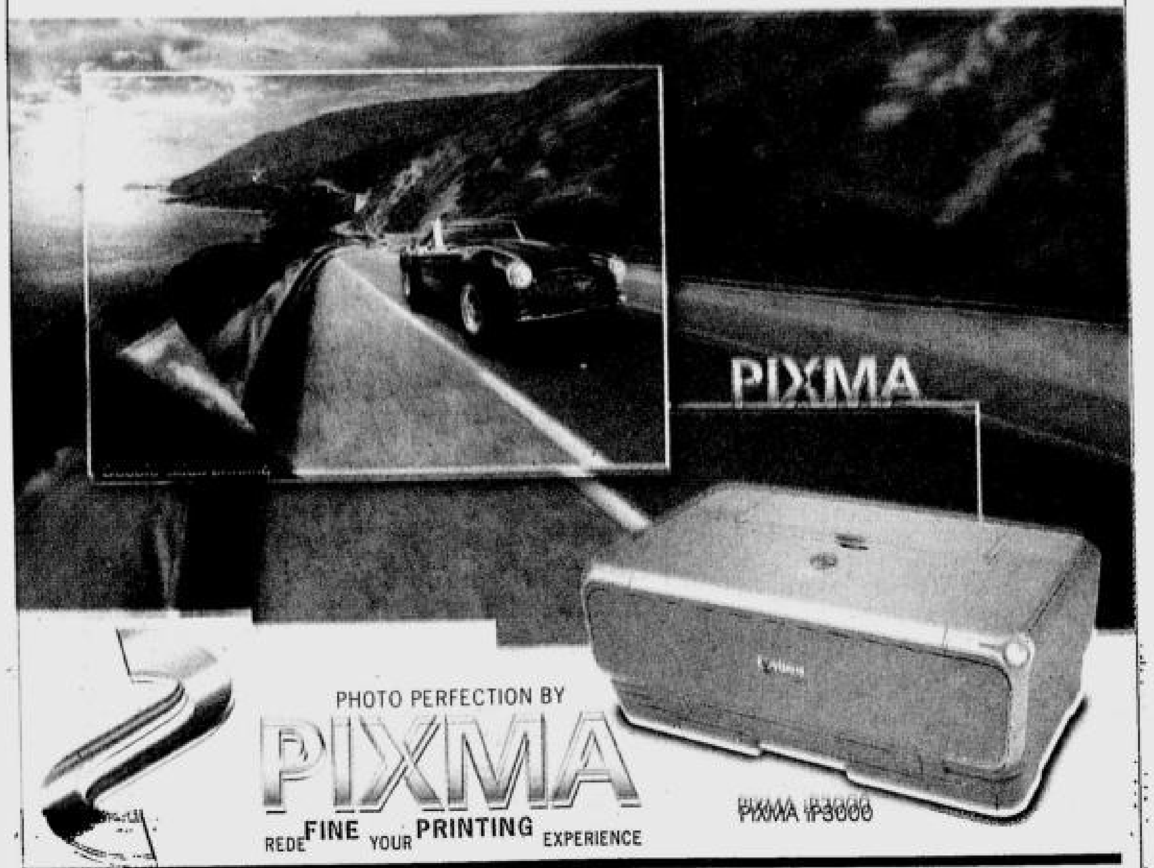

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eTelecare Global Solutions, the world's most awarded call center, invests heavily in people development

eTelecare Global Solutions is doubly proud to have been cited as one of The Offshore 100's Top 10 Leaders in Human Capital Development. "We have received the most number of awards based on our superior quality," according to Bobby Claros, eTelecare's Senior Manager for Organizational Development. "This award is distinct from the rest as it recognizes how heavy investments in people yield superior results."

eTelecare's training programs are tailor-fit to the individual's level of competence and character. Aside from the basic foundation and client specific training programs, world-leading international programs, such as Covey's 7 Habits, DDI's Interaction Management, Project Management, Problem Solving and Decision Making are also readily available to all employees.

eTelecare invests significantly more in support personnel to train, develop, coach and mentor its front liners. For example, eTelecare has one supervisor for every eight agents, while typical competitors may have one supervisor for every 15-20 agents. Similarly, for every 12 customer service agents, eTelecare has one quality monitoring agent randomly recording and evaluating calls, looking for strengths and areas for improvement.

eTelecare is so committed to empowering its workforce that it maintains over 100 corporate trainers and Organizational Development practitioners who are tasked to create training programs and define the career map of each employee. With the two-fold mission of sharpening skills and building character, front liners are groomed to assume leadership and specialist positions within the organization.

To date, eTelecare has invested more than 800,000 hours to enhance the level of competence and build the character of its workforce. Over P130 million was spent to develop training programs, purchase training equipment and rent training facilities. While this amount is enough to put up a building, eTelecare instead chose to invest in its people.

All in all, eTelecare leaves no stone unturned to ensure that its team is the sharpest and most exceptional in the call center industry, thus transforming call center agents to global knowledge professionals.

Call Center, A Dead-end Job

eTelecare Global Solutions, the world's most awarded and largest Asia-based call center, debunks this notion.

Case in point is one of eTelecare's success stories: Eli Igoy.

After graduating from Ateneo, Eli attended a Company Presentation given by eTelecare's President Jim Franke. He was impressed with the potential for growth in such a new industry. Thus, he joined eTelecare in 2000 and has since received formal and informal training to enhance his skills on the job. What he finds very enriching are the continuous coaching and one-on-one mentoring sessions. He observed that other call centers only train to develop skills. But Eli said, "eTelecare's holistic people development program not only sharpened my on-the-job competencies but more importantly, built my character."

With this kind of support, Eli has been promoted seven times. Over five years, Eli rose from a front liner to an Operations Manager. Now, he leads 760 agents handling a complex account that generates millions of dollars in revenue. Not bad for a 25-year old!

eTelecare's success story Eli Igoy

Even now that Eli holds a high position, he continually receives training to prepare him for the next senior level.

So, who says you cannot build a career in a call center? Eli Igoy is proof that there will always be room for career growth and advancement in this industry.

eTelecare and Its World-class Operation Produces a Filipina to be the World's Best Call Center Agent

eTelecare develops its people to become true "global knowledge professionals". Besting 200 candidates from all over the world, eTelecare's very own **Arlyn Acleta** was cited by Call Center Magazine as the **World's Best Call Center Agent**. She is the first and still the only Asian to have won this award. This honor is proof that human capital development is key in the pursuit of global excellence.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, congratulates eTelecare's Arlyn Acleta when she won the "World's Best Call Center Agent Award".

Offshore 100 names Philippine-based eTelecare as one of the world's Top Offshore Call Centers, Leader in Human Capital Development

2005 OFFSHORE 100

MANAGING OFFSHORE I NEOIT

eTelecare Global Solutions, a Philippine-based call center, was cited by The Offshore 100 as among the Top 3 Offshore Call Centers and Top 10 Leaders in Human Capital Development at awarding rites during neoIT's recent Annual Offshore Outsourcing Conference in New York City.

neoIT, the leading offshore advisory and management firm, and CMP's *Managing Offshore*, the monthly newsletter for global-sourcing managers, announced the results of the first annual 'Offshore 100' joint research project to assess BPO (business process outsourcing) and ITO (information technology outsourcing) service providers from around the world.

The Offshore 100 honors 100 global companies that demonstrate leadership, innovation and outstanding performance among ITO and BPO firms. This study is a valuable tool to guide companies in their selection of the right outsourcing service provider.

"This citation is very special as eTelecare is the only Philippine-based call center honored as one of the world's Top 3 Offshore Call Centers," according to Benedict Hernandez, eTelecare's VP for Operations and General Manager. In addition, "eTelecare is the only call center with presence in the Philippines that was recognized as a Top 10 Leader in Human Capital Development."

"The process for choosing the Offshore 100 honorees is systematic and highly competitive. An online application was developed to identify aspects of achievement in four key areas: financial, operations, clients and people. A panel of Managing Offshore editors and neoIT experts with in-depth knowledge in the corresponding areas judged the entries. Companies were scored and ranked based on how they stack up against the competition in the four evaluation areas." *Adapted from www.theoffshore100.com*

The Offshore 100 is published in Managing Offshore's January 2005 issue. A copy of the study can be obtained at **www.theoffshore100.com** or **www.managingoffshore.com.**

For more information, visit **www.neoIT.com**.

eTELECARE PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT.
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ETELECARE NAMED AS ONE OF THE OFFSHORE 100'S TOP 10 LEADERS IN HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BY NEOIT, THE LEADING OFFSHORE ADVISORY AND MANAGEMENT FIRM AND CMP'S *MANAGING OFFSHORE*, THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR GLOBAL-SOURCING MANAGERS.

This citation is very special as it recognizes not only our drive for excellence but also the value we put in developing our workforce. eTelecare is the only call center with presence in the Philippines that has been given this honor.

We sharpen our people to become industry leaders, we leave no stone unturned:

- World-leading behavioral programs like Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, DDI's Interaction Management, Project Management, Problem Solving and Decision Making, which are typically given by other companies to managers only, are made available to every employee at eTelecare.
- More than 100 people are dedicated to look after the training and career development of each employee. Compared with industry standards, we have twice as many people coaching, mentoring and providing support to our front liners.
- Over ₱130 million have been spent in producing training programs tailor-fit to the individual's level of competence and character. That amount is enough to put up a building, but eTelecare chose to invest it in people development.

The facts show, the experts agree, that when it comes to people development, the e mark transforms plain minds to sharp ones.

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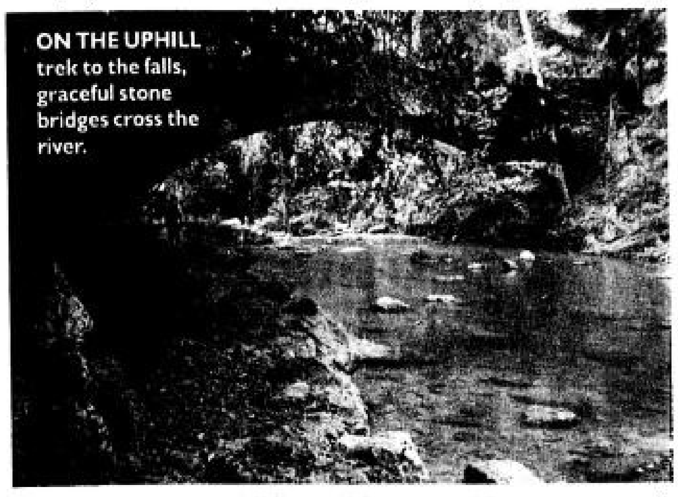
Pride of place motivates Kayasan Falls community

KAYASAN Falls, a natural wonder carefully and proudly cared for by the community that lives on the site



ON THE UPHILL trek to the falls, graceful stone bridges cross the river.

The Badian folk in Cebu take care of their falls. They don't fleece tourists

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

LIKE most Filipinos, it was back to roots for me for Holy Week. A spur of the moment trip to Kayasan Falls in the southwestern Cebu town of Badian was the defining moment of the week, turning out to be unexpected validation that some things are, indeed, being done right in this country.

We packed children and grandchildren into the car early one morning for the three-hour drive south toward Badian.

Less than an hour after leaving home, we stopped at the Carcar town market to assemble a Cebuano lunch: *inasal na baboy at manok, pusó* (rice in individual portions cooked in woven coconut pouches) of purple, not white, rice (only found in Carcar), killer *chicharon* that the town is famous for and vinegar made from tuba.

For dessert, the market yielded *takoy* (pomelo from Carcar mountain orchards), puffed rice *ampao*, coconut *bocarillo* in pastel colors, and sticky coconut-flavored rice flour *bibingka* seared perfectly on a bed of banana leaves.

Into the basket went my comfort food. Lunch was going to be enough to make my day but there were more surprises in store.

The breathtaking drive from Carcar crosses the central mountain range of Cebu to get to the opposite side of the island. On reaching the mountain peak, a superb panorama of Tañon Strait backdropped by Negros Island opens up before the road descends back to sea level on the western coast of the island.

A simple sign in the Badian plaza beside the church pointed us toward Kayasan Falls. Men greeted us as we drove into the small parking lot, offering porter and guide services, explaining that their community cooperative had standardized their rates.

Expecting to be hustled as what happens in most destinations, the courtesy that greeted us was the first surprise. The second was being issued an official receipt after having paid admission in the small information office manned by community members who also manned souvenir stalls. There were no people shoving souvenirs at our faces.

The falls were a 45-minute leisurely uphill trek that followed the river. Our guide talked about the cleanliness of the water, named the trees, and reminded us to respect nature.

Women from the community swept fallen leaves off the path but did not have to worry about picking up the trash people normally threw since there was none. Trash bins are found at regular intervals along the route.

Picnic tables shaded by canopies built of locally sourced *anahaw* leaves circle the far end of the pool in full view of the falls. Community members rent out tables, prepare lunches and snacks, rent out life vests for those who want to paddle around or dive into the cold, freshwater pool on bamboo rafts.

The Kayasan Falls Community Cooperative goes about its business with a dignity unseen in most Philippine tourist destinations. They are fiercely proud of their falls, genuinely committed to caring for their environment, and determined not to fleece tourists.

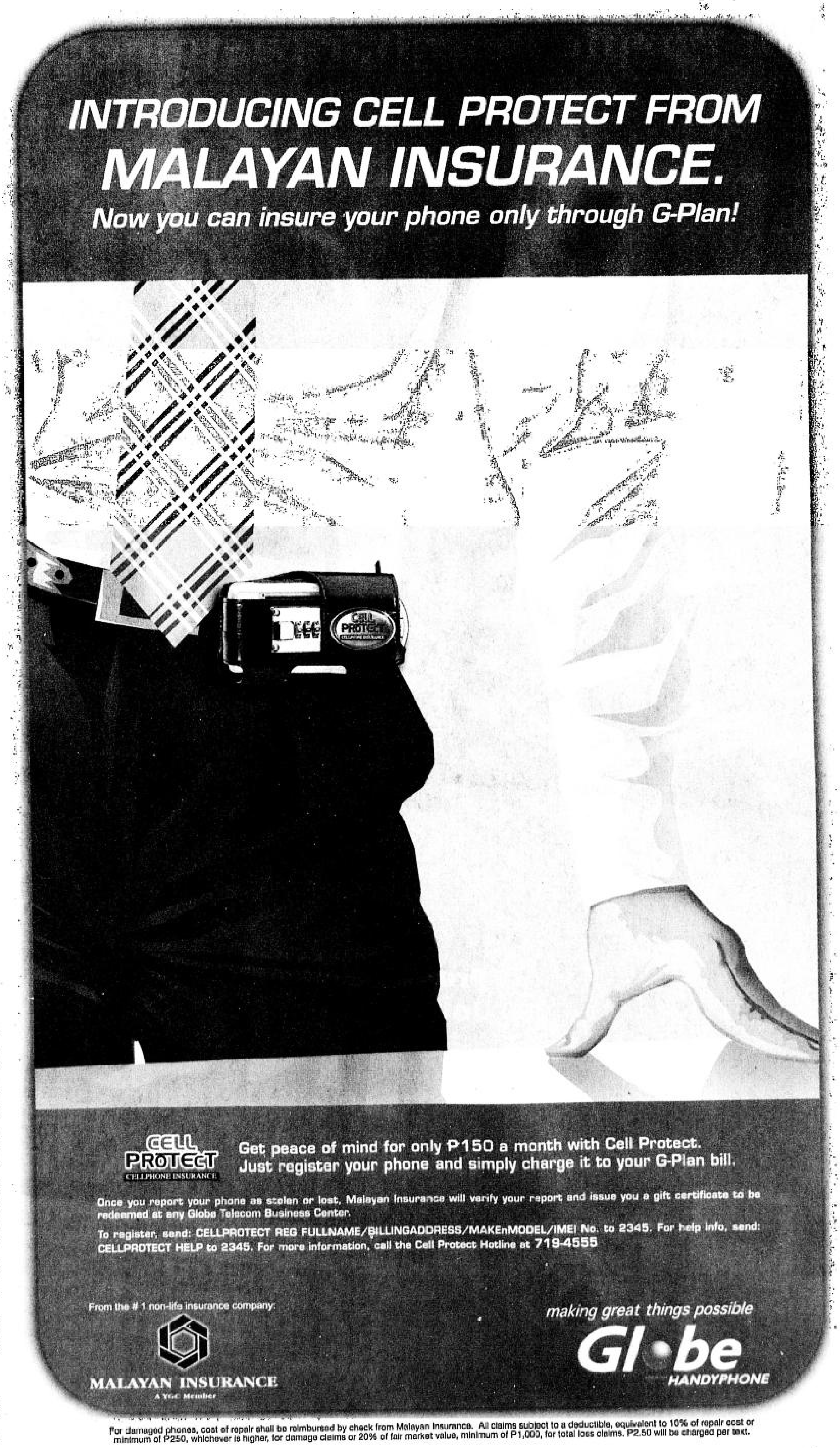
Members of the cooperative exhibit pride of place. They are environmental heroes and a model for community tourism development.

The Kayasan Falls Community Cooperative can teach the Philippines a lesson on how community involvement makes tourism a personal and memorable experience.

Heritage watch: San Fernando

In San Fernando, Pampanga, an American-period concrete water tank is leaning. Too precariously, some say.

PRIDE/ C3



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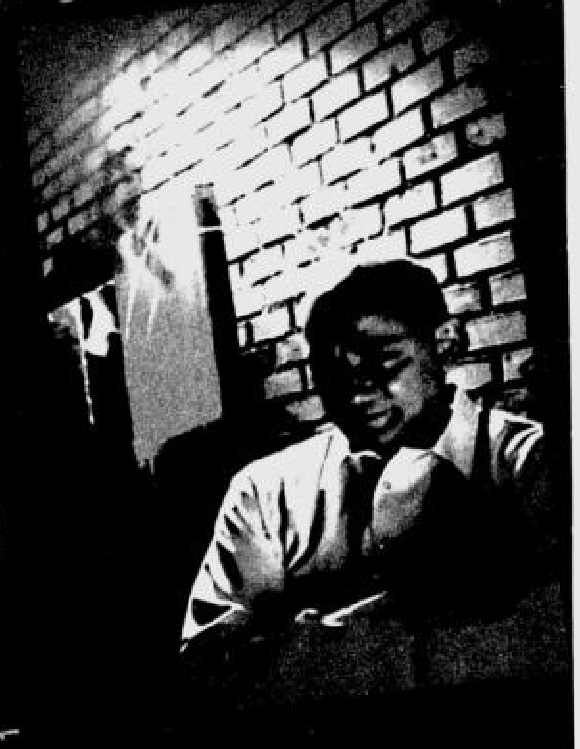

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THE PATH through forests of trees leading to the falls is swept clean and clearly marked.

THE ROMANTIC Amorsolo image of laundry being done on the river is so bad for ecology.

GUIDES take visitors on bamboo rafts on the final journey to the falls.

Pride of place motivates . . .

From page C1

To come to an agreement on whether it should be demolished as some officials maintain, or if it should be kept as a symbol of city heritage as other officials insist, city authorities have called a consultation at 10 a.m. today at the San Fernando City Hall to determine whether the tank should be demolished as recommended by the City of San Fernando Water District (CSFWD).

A respondent in the Heritage Conservation Society e-mail discussion group wrote: "A water tank is a water tank. But when it is 83 years old, one of the few remaining American colonial structures in this Pampanga capital, and leaning like Italy's Tower of Pisa, what would you do with it?"

The city tourism council wants it preserved. The City of San Fernando Water District (CSFWD) and the village council of Barangay Lourdes want it demolished.

Remember, after the Pinatubo eruption, the water tank was buried by about 10 ft (approximately three meters). The CSFWD insists it is now a threat to public safety.

However, if the political will exists to preserve it, there is a way. A respected architect, professor of architecture from the University of the Philippines, and fellow of the United Architects of the Philippines, respondsd:

"There are ways of stabilizing the soil underneath the foundations of the tank, using various methods. In simple terms, concrete slurry is pressure-injected into the soil and allowed to solidify. Of course, that's assuming it is the instability of the soil that is causing the structure to lean. This is similar to the situation at Pisa. The technology is not cheap, however, and I don't think it is possible to restore the structure to its original 'plumb.'"

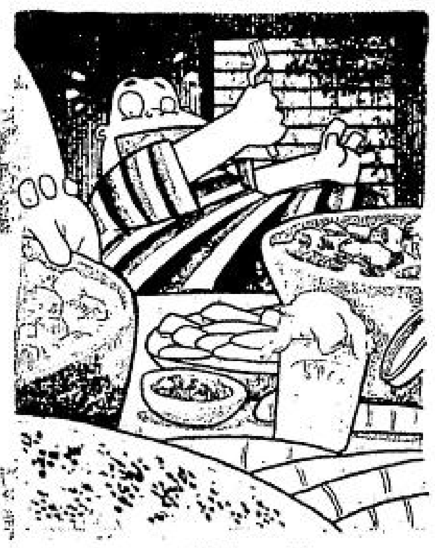
He continues: "There are at least two foreign firms in Manila, one German and one Italian, that have the technology to do this, though, as I said, I don't think it will be inexpensive. There are also probably a handful of local outfits that might be able to do the job."

Fernando Santos, chief of the city's tourism office, says the tourism council recognizes the issue of public safety. But conservation efforts, he says, need not be pitted against social needs.

Just think if the leaning tower were demolished centuries ago because it was a "threat to public safety," then Pisa would just be one of many old Italian towns with no distinguishing mark of its own.

E-mail feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com

Children's book illustrations at Mag:Net



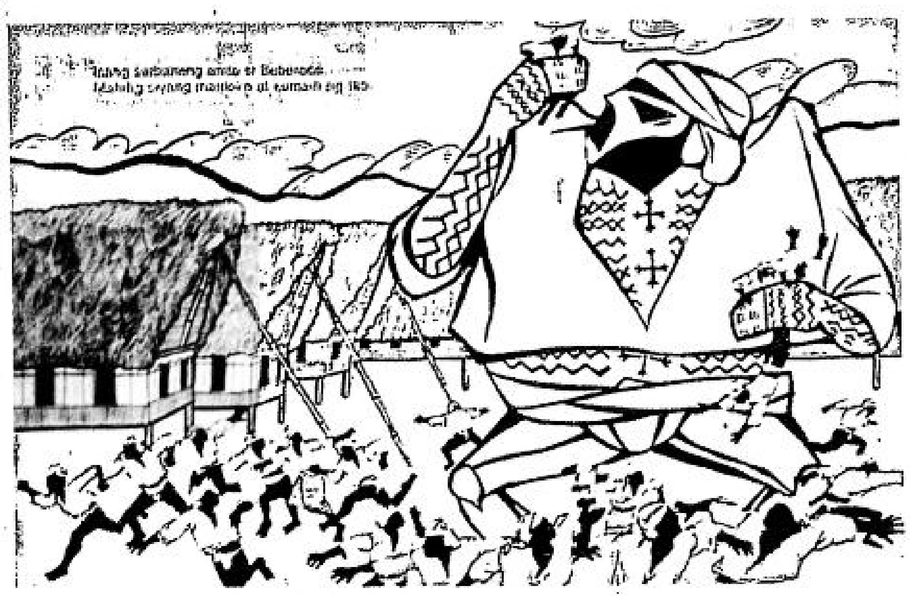
"FILIMON Mamon," by Jason Moss

ARTWORKS from Adarna House's 25 years of publishing children's books will be exhibited at Mag:net Katipunan on March 30 until April 30.

The exhibit includes the works of Alfonso Onate, Beth Parrocha-Doctolero, Brian Ballesteros, Charles Funky, Eric Roca, Ferdinand Doctolero, Ferdinand Guevarra, Hubert Fucio, Ibarra Crisostomo, Jason Moss, Jomike Tejido, Josefina Sanchez, Kora Albano, Leo Alvarado, Liza Flores, Lourdes Quimio, Mark Salvatus, Mike Adrao, Pepper Roxas, Paolo Lim, Renato Gamos, Susan de la Rosa, Totet de Jesus and Wilfredo Pollarco.

A panel discussion on "The State of Children's Book Art Today" will be held on April 23. Sponsored by Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan, it will have Roxas, De Jesus, Flores, Marcus Nada and Moss, as well as veteran children's book author Rene Villanueva, as panelists.

Call Adarna at 3723548 local 110, or Mag:net Katipunan at 9293191.



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5 PM R&B SUN[illegible]WN SLOW JA[illegible]
Get summer high[illegible]th soulful R&B [illegible] while viewing the [illegible]athtaking Boracay [illegible]
10 PM V-BAR'S E[illegible]NY GROOVES GOES TO CLUB PARAW,
Grind the night away [illegible]d put the fancy footwork in play as Dj Johnny Ver[illegible] feat. [illegible] and Dj Jenna whips up [illegible]&B the B84 [illegible]

DAY 2: aria
2 PM CELEBRITY BEAC[illegible] GAMES
Celebrities and models ge[illegible] down and dirty [illegible] game of Dodgeball, Frisbe[illegible] and bea[illegible] will sweat them and the au[illegible]nce out!
5 PM SUNDOWN CHILLOU[illegible]
Let soothing chill out music [illegible]ke weary wanderers to a delight of downtime as [illegible] sunset bleeds through in beautiful Boracay.
9 PM FASHION FOLD-OUT
Witness beautiful bodies in th[illegible] most covetable Nothing But Water swimwear [illegible]ollection this season
10 PM EMBASSY GOES TO [illegible]RIA, BORACAY TRIBAL HOUSE PARTY!
House moods meet primal bea[illegible] in this unique island party.with resident Dj M[illegible]tin Pulger feat. Manolet Dario and Karl Ty (Su[illegible]-fly)

DAY 3: COCOMANGAS
2 PM NIKE TIMING ADVENTU[illegible] RELAY
More games to bring out the [illegible]mpetit[illegible] spirit of Boracay Bound 4!
10 PM SUMMER IRIE! REGG[illegible]E NIGHT
Featuring Cebu's hottest reg[illegible] act JR [illegible]
A beach party will never be c[illegible]plete witho[illegible] live reggae music.

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Belgians map the Philippines

By Felice Prudente Sta. Maria
Contributor

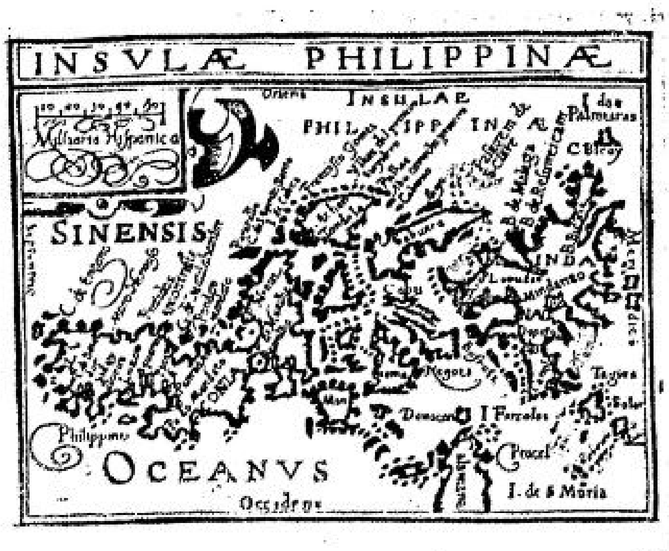
COLLECTING antique maps is one of the oldest passions. The Kingdom of Belgium, in celebration of its 175 years of Independence, and the Juana Madriaga Garcia-Natividad Galang Fajardo Collection provide a gem of an exhibit featuring the "rare treat of viewing not one but five different editions of the earliest separately printed maps of the Philippines," writes Leovino Ma. Garcia, dean of Ateneo's School of Humanities in the show catalog.

The five beautiful maps are: Insulae Philippinae/De Philippinen of 1598 engraved by Petrus Kaerius; Philippinae Insulae of 1601 by Johannes Natalius Metellus and Insulae Philippinae of 1605 by Cornelis van Wytfliet (both exhibited for the first time); Philippinae Insulae/Description des Philippines made in 1616 and Philippinae Insulae/Descriptio Philippinarum in 1618 by Petrus Bertius.

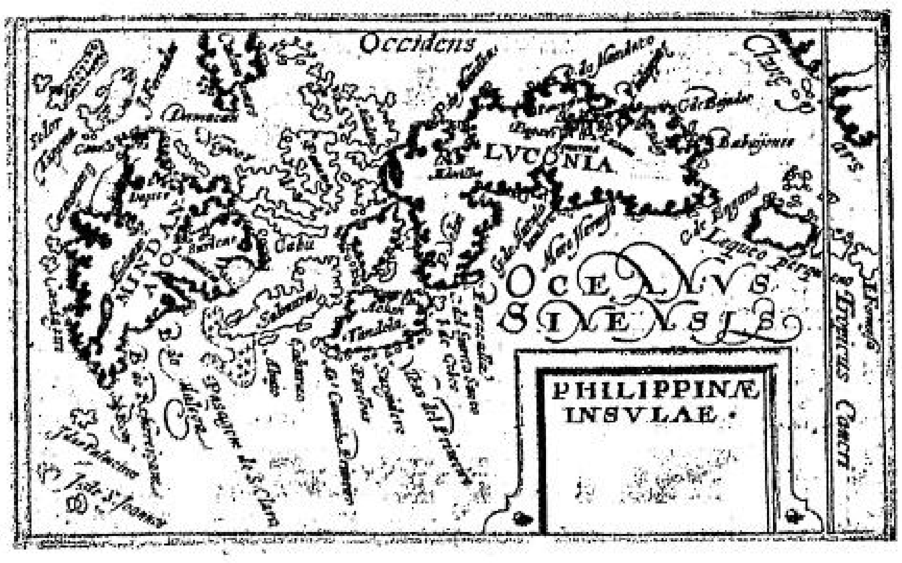
The enigmatic Island of San Juan appears as part of the Philippines in Asiae Nova Descriptio (made in 1570) by Abraham Ortelius. Although Ilhas de San Ioan became a standard landmark in Philippine maps as late as 1850, the Island does not exist! Map historians, like Thomas Suarez in his book, "Early Mapping of Southeast Asia" (Hong Kong: Periplus Editions Ltd., 1999), believe the cartographic folly cannot be blamed on the great Ortelius. San Juan Island may have been the name given by mutineers of Magallanes' voyage to an island of the Carolines. Their Portuguese captors commandeered all their maps and naval equipment before imprisoning them. Eventually the Island of San Juan started to appear in Portuguese maps anywhere between Borneo and Mindanao.

There is great visual delight in Ortelius' Maris Pacifici (here, in the Latin edition of 1608). It was the first printed map of the Pacific Ocean, and is considered a cornerstone of cartography. Toward the bottom right-hand corner, one sees angelic Victory guiding Victoria, the flagship of Fernando Magallanes toward the Philippines. It was astounding that the Victoria made it back at all to Spain. Only 35 of the original 280 crew members returned home. Sebastian Elcano took over after Magallanes was slain.

One of the first two published maps that were specifically devoted to the Philippines was Philippinae Insulae made by Petrus Bertius in 1616. Try to spot Ylhas del Premeiro Surgidero (Island of First Anchorage) off Samar (called Tandola), indicating where Miguel Lopez Legaspi, the last conquistador, first anchored in the archipelago. On the west coast of Luzon is G. de Matalhambre (Gulf of Killing Hunger), likely insinuating that an expedition enjoyed a feast there after great deprivation.



CORNELIS van Wytfliet, Insulae Philippinae of 1605



JOHANNES Natalius Metellus, Philippinae Insulae of 1601, both exhibited for the first time

Pioneer atlas

The world owes atlases to the pioneering work of the great Ptolemy and two other early mapmakers represented in the show: Gerard Mercator and Jodocus Hondius. Their India Orientalis from 1606 is displayed in its finely conserved original state. Mercator is known to have identified Homonhon Island as Buena Senal (Good Sign), most likely because Spanish chronicles said the place had two clear springs, gold, white coral in large quantity and fruits.

The Philippines is the center of Asia in a map from 1613 entitled Insulae Indiae Orientalis made by Mercator. A brilliant scientist-artist he was accused of heresy, but was released after four months of imprisonment with intervention by the University of Leuven. He moved his family to Germany where there was religious freedom and tolerance, and became the cosmographer of the Duke of Duisburg.

The show does not end with rare antiquarian maps. It brings visitors into the 21st century with satellite images of Mindanao's Pantadon Forest Range from Ateneo's Environmental Science for Social Change.

"Skills have been acquired and developed to extend the research to serve a much greater need in understanding how water is best managed. Cartography, now aided by satellite images feed into a geographic information system analysis of interacting land use patterns and social dynamics. Augmenting this analysis are comprehensive hydrogeological and geomorphopedological analyses that can be extrapolated to neighboring areas of the project sites," the show brochure explains.

In addition to the 3-D satellite images, the Ateneo Library Exhibit has three informative videos worth the viewing time. The role of mapmakers remains significant to how the world and its inhabitants evolve.

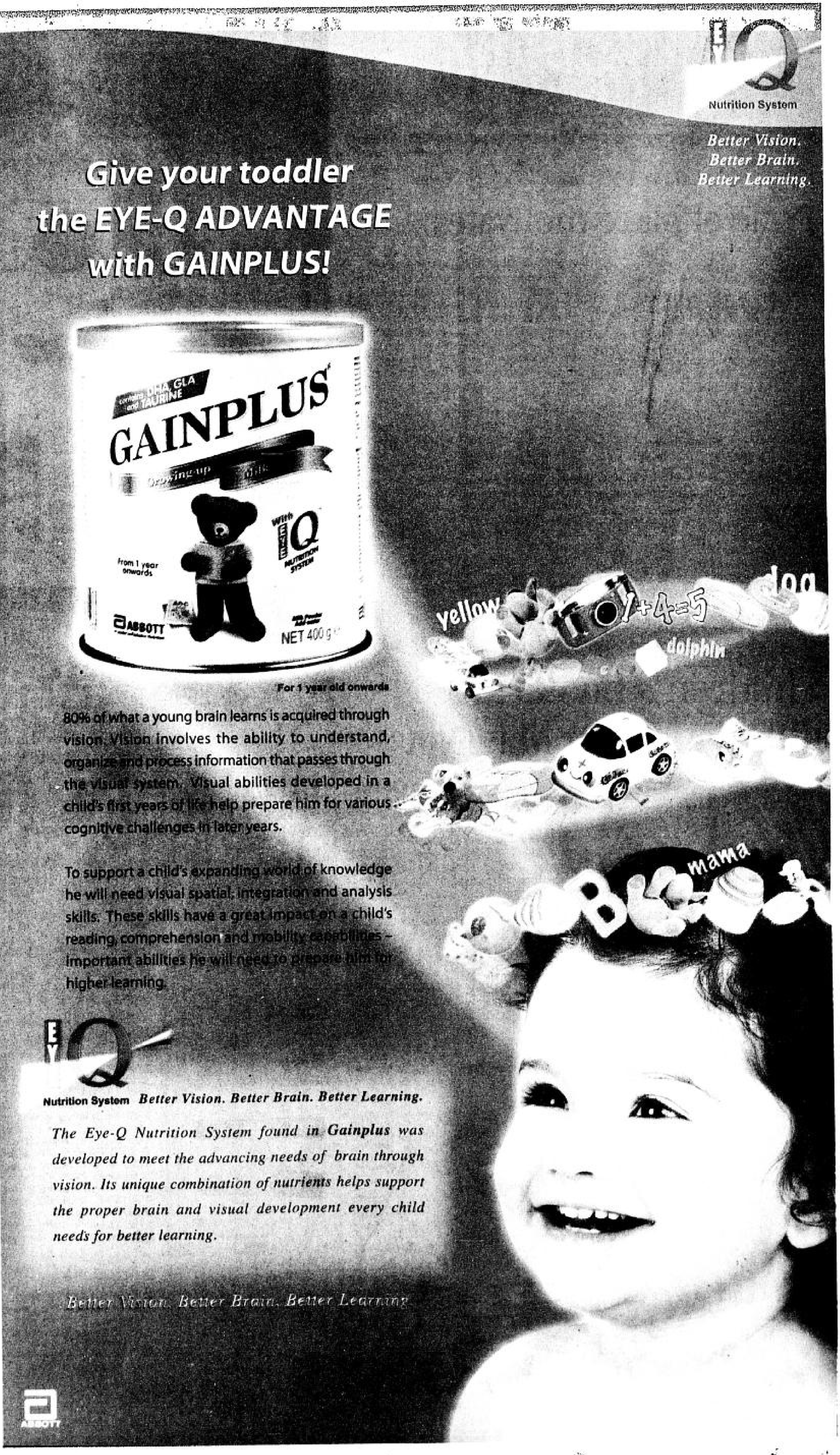
"The Belgian Contribution" is an excellent opportunity to look slowly and closely at cartographic acumen, and to revalue literacy, full understanding and efforts to bring education to all through the Jesuit missionaries.

If you are interested in learning the basics of map collecting, here are some references:

"The History of Cartography," edited by J.B. Harley and David Woodward (University of Chicago Press, 1994); Volume 2: Book 2, "Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies," includes the Philippines. You will get an introduction into how architecture predated flat maps as visual depictions of cosmological ideas, or sacred geography.

"Philippine Cartography 1320-1898," by Carlos Quirino (2nd revised edition, Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1963)—the must-read, must-have for Philippine map collectors!

"Putting the Philippines on the Map: The Belgian Contribution from the 16th to the 21st Century" runs until March 31 at the Pardo de Tavera Room, 2nd Floor, Rizal Library Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.



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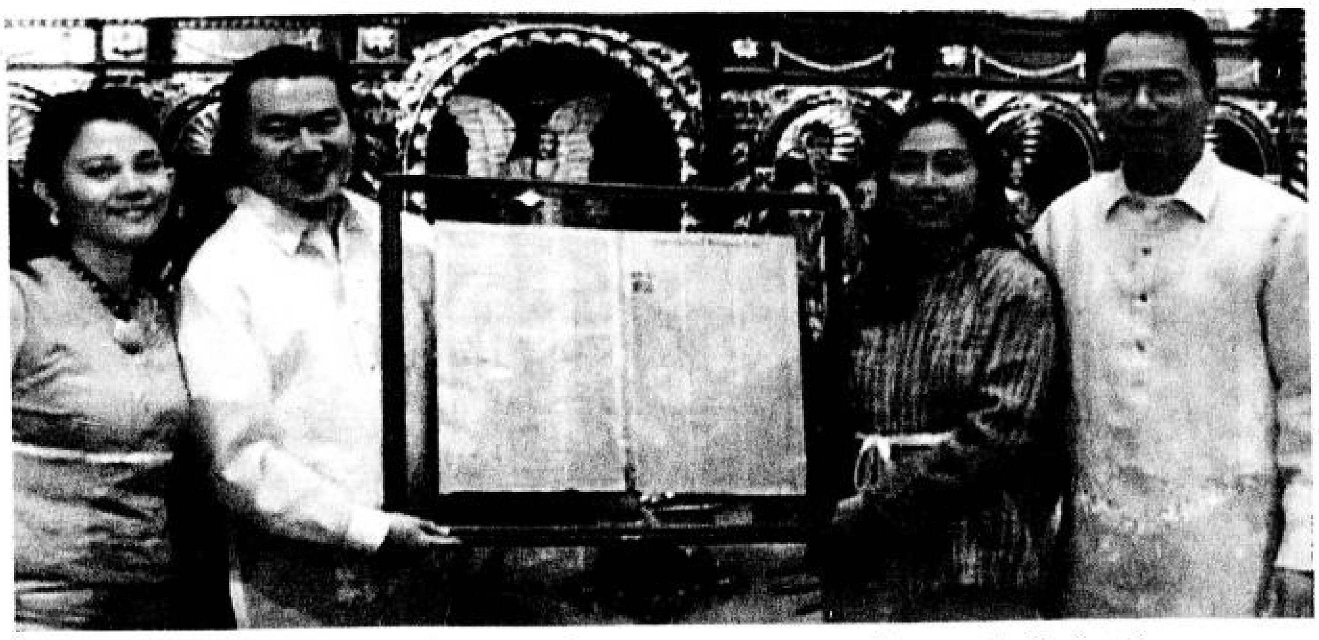
Rare document donated to Kapampangan Center

ART CRITIC Cid Reyes recently donated to the Holy Angel University Center for Kapampangan Studies an original 1763 copy of the London General Evening Post, which features an article of the British Occupation of Manila written by Gen. William Draper, the commanding officer of the British Naval Fleet that attacked and occupied Manila on Sept. 23, 1762.

The British Occupation led the Spanish colonial government to transfer the capital to Bacolor, Pampanga, until March 31, 1764. Spain also deployed Kapampangan soldiers to attempt to reclaim Manila one week after the invasion; Jose Manalastas of Candaba field marshal of the Kapampangan troops, even managed to enter Draper's tent and stab him in the chest.

Draper's account of the invasion, which was the main story on the newspaper, mentions the Kapampangan soldiers: "(The Spanish defense) was augmented by a body of 10,000 Indians from the Province of Pampanga, a fierce and barbarous people."



ART critic Cid Reyes (second from left), a native of Apalit, Pampanga, donates to the Center for Kapampangan Studies an original copy of The General Evening Post (London), dated April 23, 1763,with a headlined article on the British attack of Manila. The attack led to the transfer of the capital to Bacolor, Pampanga. Also in photo are Ms Reyes, Bernadette Nepomuceno, president of Holy Angel University, and Robby Tantingco, director of the Center for Kapampangan Studies.

The Kapampangans were so fierce, the article goes, that the Spanish governor "sent out a flag of truce, to apologize for some barbarities committed by the Savages lately mentioned." Draper's secretary, a Lieut. Fryar, who was preparing a safe-conduct pass for the Spanish governor's nephew as requested, was brutally slain by Kapampangans: "The Barbarians, without respecting his character, inhumanly murdered him, mangling his body in a manner too shocking to mention. In their fury, they mortally wounded (the Spanish governor's nephew) who had endeavored to save Mf. Fryar."

In another incident, the Kapampangans took advantage of pre-dawn rains to attack the British camp, but were repulsed by the British. "Had their skill or weapons been equal to their strength and ferocity," wrote Gen. Draper, "it might have cost us dear. Although armed chiefly with bows, arrows, and lances, they advanced up to the very muzzles of our pieces, repeated their assaults, and died like wild beasts, gnawing the bayonets."

When the British emerged victorious, "100 of the Spaniards and the Indians, who would not surrender, were put to the sword. Three hundred more... were drowned in attempting to escape over the river, which was very deep and rapid." However, Gen. Draper writes, "to conciliate the affection of the natives, all the Indians who fell into our hands were dismissed in safety."

Printmaker's works now in a book

THE BOOK, "Profound Afterglow: The Prints of Lenore RS Lim," is a collection of works that shows how the artist has distilled and abstracted images from nature.

Though currently based overseas, Lim's works clearly acknowledges her Philippine roots.

The collection in the book shows a coloration that is subdued and yet rich, abstract yet realistic.

In her foreword, Agnes Gund, chair and president of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, says rarely does one in the art world discover an artist "as pure and as talented" as Lim.

The book also carries an introduction by Paul Sharpe Contemporary Art; an essay by Ruben DF Defeo, professor of Art History, Theory and Criticism, College of Fine Arts, University of the Philippines, Diliman; and an interview with the artist.

"Profound Afterglow" is the first full assessment and exploration of Lim's artistic output. It carries full color and black and white plates of the artist's prints from the earliest in 1991 to the present.

The book traces the course of the artist's life and her work.

Lim is a recipient of the 2004 Pamana ng Pilipino Presidential Award and the prestigious Jackson Pollock-Lee Krasner Foundation grant.

Currently dividing her time between Vancouver and New York, she is a tenured teacher at the United Nations International School in New York. Lim is a wife, mother of two and a leader in her Christian life community.

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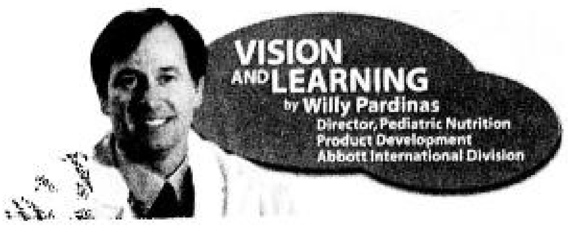

VISION AND LEARNING
by Willy Pardinas
Director, Pediatric Nutrition
Product Development
Abbott International Division

EYE Q
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Better Learning.

Your child may be lagging behind in
brain and visual development
and you may not even see it.

80% of what a child perceives, comprehends, and remembers depends on the visual system. The visual system helps us absorb information, understand it, then get it out again so it becomes useful. Getman, a renowned behavioral optometrist, said, "Vision is the dominant mode in the development of intelligence." The more visually efficient a person is, the higher her score on many intelligence tests. Thus, if there should be any visual interference, a child may not reach her maximum potential.

More than 98% of all infants are born with normal and healthy eyes, but not good vision. Vision is developed and its proper development depends on many physiological, environmental, and psychological factors, including disease, infection, fatigue, environmental and emotional stress, attention, attitude, and nutrition. If the visual system is efficient, it will be well-equipped to handle these influencing factors.

Likewise, a baby's brain is still disorganized at birth. To make all the necessary connections for more complex thinking when she grows up, she needs a lot of stimulation from the different senses. This is where the interplay between brain and vision come in. Proper brain development in children is also helped by good nutrition, warm and loving relationships with parents and other people, and positive mental stimulation from birth onwards. These factors make a big difference in children's general development for a lifetime.

A parent's guide to children's learning and vision development

If you notice any of the following behaviors in your child, she may be suffering from a developmental problem that may ultimately affect her learning.

○ holds book or object unusually close
○ closes one eye or covers eye with hand
○ is unable to sit still or cannot stay on a task for long periods
○ twists or tilts head toward book or object so as to favor one eye
○ is disorganized and frustrated when studying visual information
○ turns or tilts head to see
○ head is frequently tilted to one side, or one shoulder is noticeably higher
○ poor visual/motor skills (often called, "hand-eye coordination")
○ problems moving in space, frequently bumps into things or drops things

If there is a problem, your doctor is the best person to consult about the possible therapy or treatment program to help

Remember that everyone is born with the ability to develop good vision, and that there is a critical period for this development to take place: usually during the first several years of life. A person's brain is also shaped the most during the first 10 years of life. Proper visual stimulation helps because it has been proven to produce developmental advantages in children. Children exposed to stimulation activities have a more advanced mental development. They have a higher level of attentiveness, concentration, and curiosity. You can invest in your child's learning by giving her adequate nutrition that supports proper brain growth and visual development.

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Our eyes are the windows through which we see the world. The eyes, and the brain, are vital organs that are so important for nearly every action that we perform in life. In order to function properly, our eyes and brain need a wide array of nutrients. Children, in particular, need the right nourishment to help in the proper development of their brain and vision.

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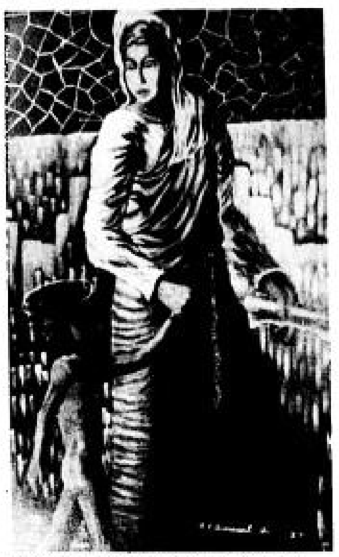
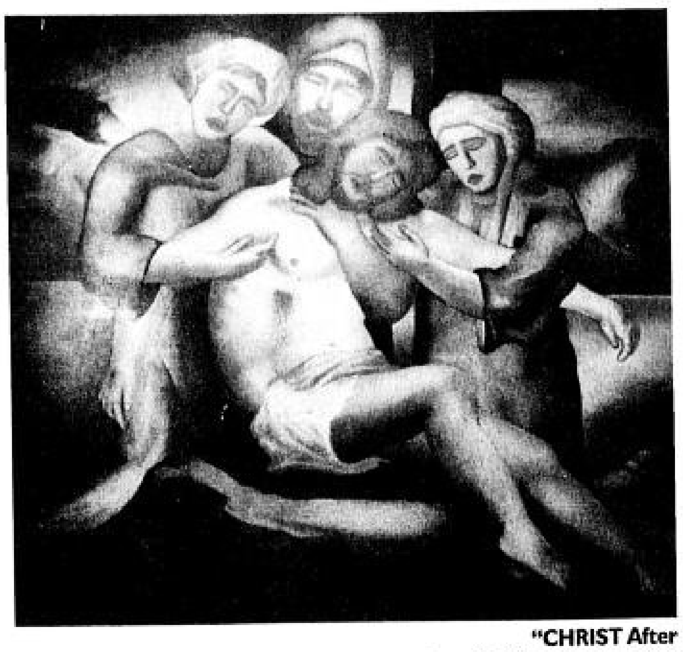
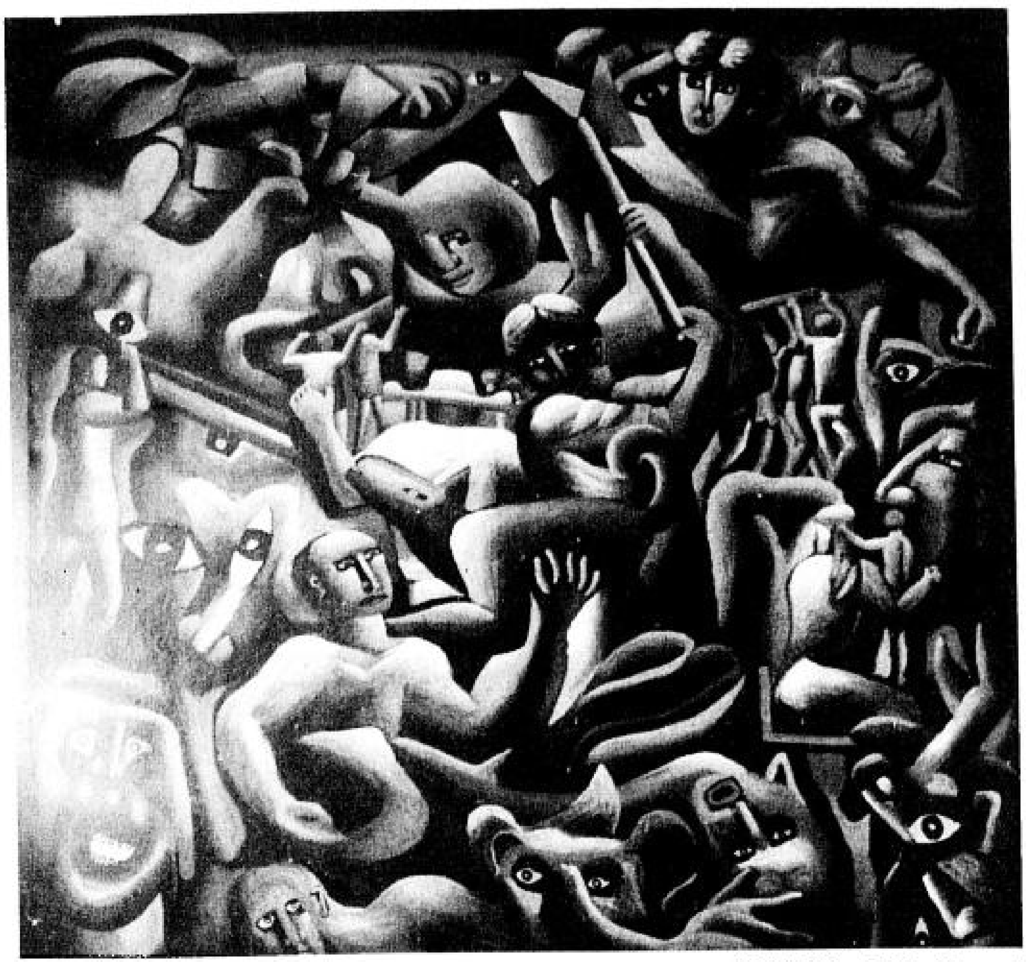
Sources.
www.eye-spy.net, www.visionandlearning.org, www.children-special-needs.org
http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/human/pubs/brain_nc.html



"MARY, Help the Little Ones," by Raul Dumaual Jr.



"CHRIST After Good Friday," by Dumaaul



"IBANG Mundo," by Dumaual

The three faces of rebirth

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THREE post-Lenten shows herald the advent of new talents on the art scene.

One of them is getting a posthumous tribute from his kin. Death at age 22 cut short Raul Dumaual Jr.'s dream of becoming a great artist. But 13 years after his death in 1992, his memory, through the work painted from his dreams, will surely live on.

Dumaual was a rare breed of an artist who, before he succumbed to cancer, accomplished what others could only hope to achieve in their entire lifetime. Mainly self-taught, he parlayed powerfully moving images in the surrealist mode, taking on mural-sized configurations culled from his dreams, desires and apocalyptic visions.

Dumaual had his first show at 19 at the Manila Museum for the Arts (now Museong Pambata). It was followed by another show at the Holiday Inn Art Gallery, reinforcing the untrammeled style displayed in his initial show.

His third show was at the West Gallery in 1990, and his fourth at the Manila Museum in 1991, which tragically was his last, as he lost the battle against the Big C.

Dumaual was mainly inspired by Van Gogh and the murals of Michaelangelo. As he continually evolved, he dealt with religious themes such as man's fall from grace and the troubled world, exploring the necessity of healing and redemption, conjuring images of the future utopia.

The show at San Agustin Museum (April 1-25) is being organized by his family: his widowed mother, the former Zita Servillas; younger sister Melinda, who is also a painter; and elder brother Roberto, a teacher in New Jersey, United States.

The paintings, done in 1989-1992 just before his death, reveal the artist's sharp instincts for composition, balance and control over the jumble of images, many of them culled from his dreams. It shows a postmodern mind made more acute by his obsessive-compulsive nature.

> Dumaual, before succumbing to cancer, accomplished what others could only hope to achieve in their entire lifetime

Dumaual often resorted to poetic metaphors and symbols in association with his personal idiom. His forms and colors had the quality of dream imagery, merging the figurative and the abstract, familiar reality existing in the context of edgily macabre private visions.

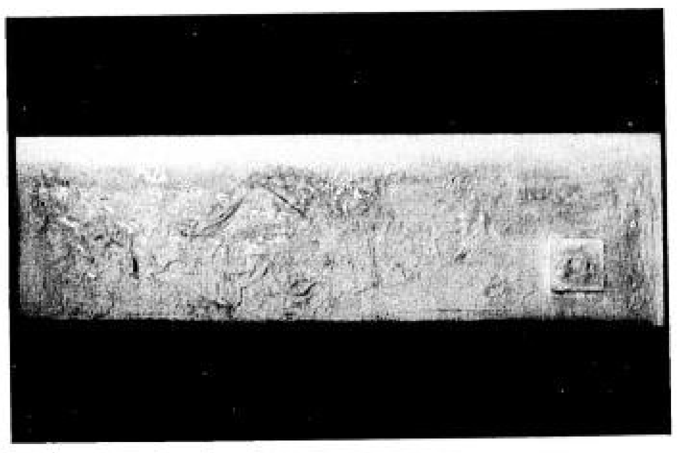
A devout Catholic, Dumaual donated some of his works to churches in his neighborhood, like the painting of the Virgin Mary done on the eve of the first Edsa People Power anniversary.

Another suite of paintings will be exhibited at the Kanlungan ng Sining at Rizal Park starting April 8.

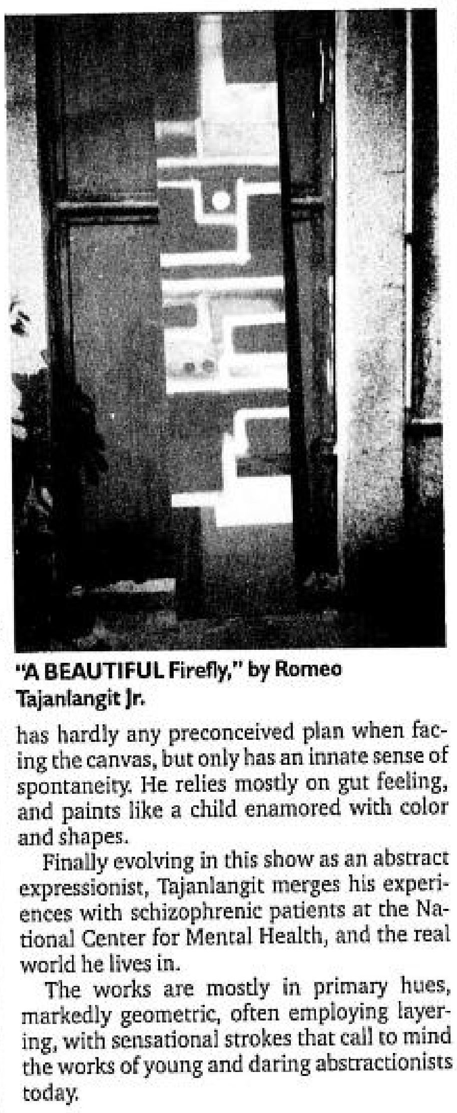
Nurse who paints

Another self-taught artist, Romeo Jimenez Tajanlangit, recently mounted a show , his third, at the National Telecommunication Commission (BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City). A psychiatric nurse by profession, Tajanlangit comes from Bacolod City and paints in the expressionist style of the famous Negrense painter, Nunelucio Alvarado.

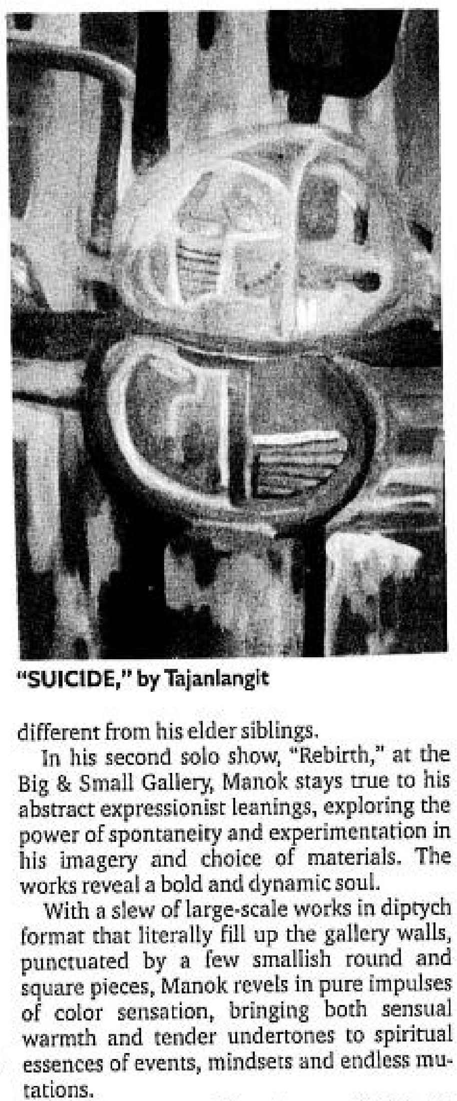
Tajanlangit had previously exhibited at the SSS Art Gallery and the Philippine Heart Center. He is slated to do another show at the Pasig City Museum in May.



"REBIRTH," by Manok



"A BEAUTIFUL Firefly," by Romeo Tajanlangit Jr.



"SUICIDE," by Tajanlangit

Working in a variety of media, Tajanlangit has hardly any preconceived plan when facing the canvas, but only has an innate sense of spontaneity. He relies mostly on gut feeling, and paints like a child enamored with color and shapes.

Finally evolving in this show as an abstract expressionist, Tajanlangit merges his experiences with schizophrenic patients at the National Center for Mental Health, and the real world he lives in.

The works are mostly in primary hues, markedly geometric, often employing layering, with sensational strokes that call to mind the works of young and daring abstractionists today.

Abstractionist Manok

Another artist with a most unusual moniker, Manok is actually Roldan Ventura, younger brother of Ronald and Olan, who wishes to have an identity and painting style different from his elder siblings.

In his second solo show, "Rebirth," at the Big & Small Gallery, Manok stays true to his abstract expressionist leanings, exploring the power of spontaneity and experimentation in his imagery and choice of materials. The works reveal a bold and dynamic soul.

With a slew of large-scale works in diptych format that literally fill up the gallery walls, punctuated by a few smallish round and square pieces, Manok revels in pure impulses of color sensation, bringing both sensual warmth and tender undertones to spiritual essences of events, mindsets and endless mutations.

The show proves Manok can well claim to have taken the right path, an artist finally reborn in the true spirit of abstraction.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com.

WOMEN of the Saturday Group relax with restaurateur Bing Huaneza of "Yahong" at the Davao International Airport before taking a Cebu Pacific flight to Manila. Front row: Alfa Larracas, Anna de Leon and Migs Villanueva. Back row: Merci Melchor, Remy Boquiren, Sheila Tiangco, Huaneza and Lydia Velasco

DAVAO Days. Baby Garcia of Davao City (standing, right) treated the Saturday Group to a sumptuous lunch in a mountain lodge at the foot of Mt. Apo. With her in this photo are Remy Boquiren, Malang, Lydia Velasco, Pia Carabuena, Pilar Mansanero, Alfa Larracas, Caña, Roel Obemio, Bing Siochi, Roland Santos, Anna de Leon, Sheila Tiangco and Merci Melchor.

Saturday Group goes to Davao

THE SATURDAY Group of Artists, led by chair Cris Cruz and president Buds Convocar, is holding a show in Davao City.

Participating artists are Merci Melchor, Malang, Ana de Leon, Lydia Velasco, Migs Villanueva, Sheila Tiangco, Caña, Remy Boquiren, Bing Siochi, Roel Obemio, Fernando Sena, Roland Santos, Nik Masangkay, Gerrico Blanco, Ben Infante and Alfa Larracas.

The show recently opened at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, sponsored by Cebu Pacific. The show was curated by Ophie Dee of 828 Gallery. It will be on view until March 31.

Beneficiary of the exhibit is the Diego Silang Elementary School of Davao.

The group under Sena also interacted with the children of Bantay Bata and Diego Silang Elementary School.

THE SATURDAY Group of Artists, led by Malang (center), recently opened an art exhibit at the Royal Mandaya Hotel in Davao City. Guests of honor Glen Escandor, Pia Carabuena and Beth Dureza formally opened the show March 15.

GSIS painting contest offers P1.5 million in prizes

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System (GSIS) has launched its Second GSIS Painting Competition, which offers P1.5 million in prizes.

GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia said that the theme of the competition is "Pista sa Pasinaya, Celebrating the Filipino," to portray the country's "rich cultural heritage."

Garcia said the painting competition is meant to capture the spirit of the Philippines' diverse expressions of memorializing achievement, religion, harvest, prosperity, marriage, friendship and peace settlement.

"Throughout the year, the Filipino calendar is punctuated by colorful and symbolic festivals: the Canao of Ifugao, the Penagbenga of Mt. Province, the Peñafrancia fluvial parade of Camarines Sur, the Moriones of Marinduque, the Higantes of Rizal, the Ati-Atihan of Aklan, the Sinulog of Cebu, the Dinagyang of Iloilo, the Maskara of Negros Occidental, and the Kadayawan of Davao," he said.

Garcia added: "It is in these occasions that the people move in one spirit, one sentiment and as one community."

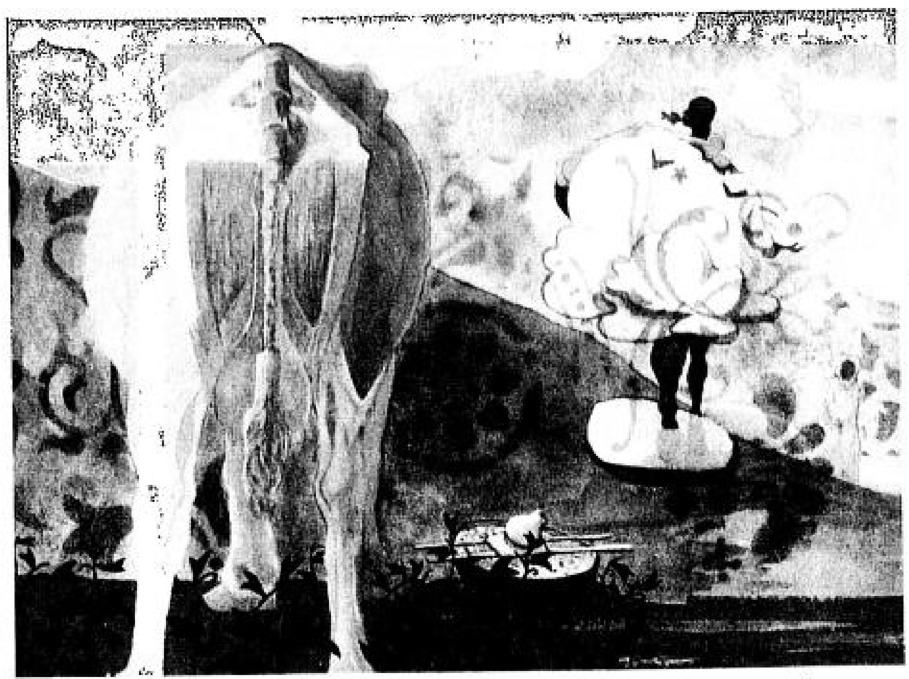
The state pension fund chief said in launching the painting competition, the GSIS not only intends to orient art as an aesthetic experience, but also to instill cultural heritage awareness to the general public.

The competition is open to students and established artists in the following media: oil on canvass, acrylic and watercolor.

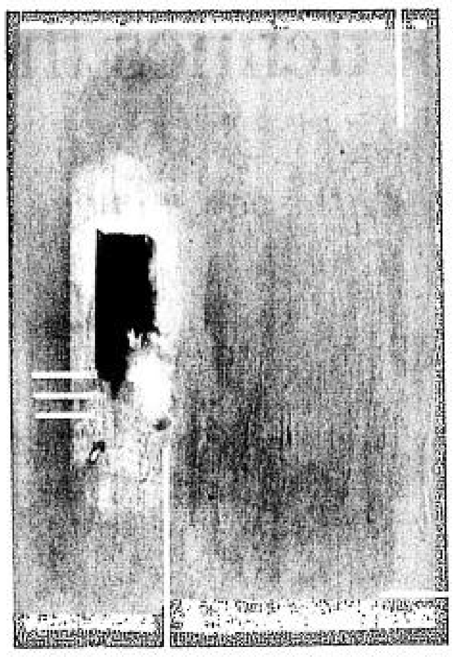
Maximum size of the work is three feet by four feet. It must weigh no more than 15 kilos. Entries must hang on a wall to qualify. Prizes are as follows: for professional category: P350,000 (1st), P250,000 (2nd) and P150,000 (3rd); for student category: P250,000 (1st) P200,000 (2nd) and P150,000 (3rd).

Ten entries (five each) from the two categories will also get P20,000 apiece as Jurors' Choices awards.

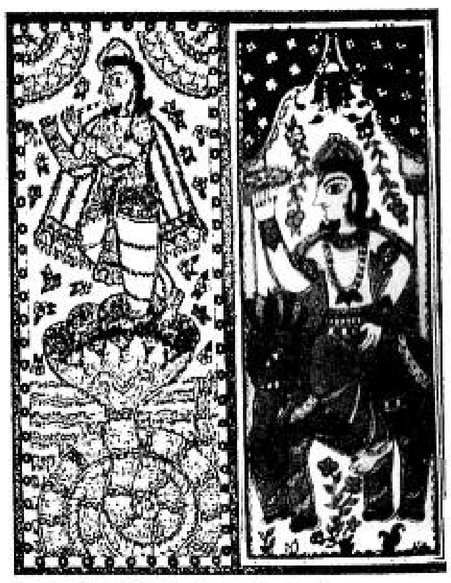
Deadline for submission is May 1. Call 5511301.



"FALLING from Grace," by Jason Moss



"UNTITLED," by Ruel Caasi



TRADITIONAL Indian folk painting

Chabet at West and Finale, various artists at Pinto

VISUAL ARTS

CONNIE Zapanta's "Connie's Children" will be exhibited April 9-May 9 at the Saturday Group Gallery, 2/F, Ali Mall, Cubao, QC. The Makabata School Foundation, Inc. will be the beneficiary of this exhibit. The artist presents her modernist impasto pastel impressions of children at play, in ballet classes or native games.

ROBERTO Chabet's two-gallery installation, titled "Intermediate Geography," takes its title from the Commonwealth-era book used in elementary school. The artist uses corrugated iron roofing sheets, plywood panels, mirrors, neon texts, paintings based on photographs of a house, box-framed book turned into a spread showing a photo of a World War II secret police archive, plywood Monopoly-like houses, comforter and body bag. The exhibit runs on March 29-April 12 at Finale and West Gallery (Artwalk, 4/L, SM Megamall A). Call 6342410 to 11.

THE BOSTON Gallery presents Yasmin Almonte's "Essence" at the upper gallery and Jason Moss's exhibit at lower gallery on April 2-27 at 72 Boston St., Cubao, QC. Almonte displays painting methods like dripping, washes and free brushwork as processes of evoking essences of feeling. Moss features his recent works in painting and collage. Call 7229205.

PINTO ART Gallery features Leo Abaya's "Figures and Grounds at the House"; Jim Orencio's "Recent Works"; Noel Mahilum's "Batu-Bato"; Deo Arellano's "Alien Sex: The Erotics of Chaos"; and Datu Arellano's "Whites Series" on April 10-May 1 at 1 Sierra Madre St., Grand Heights, Antipolo City. Abaya uses images sourced from contemporary and colonial photographs, prints and illustrations of and related to Filipinos and the Philippines. Orencio pursues the sensuous play of acrylic paint's translucency over layers of collaged glossy magazine cutouts and photographs. Mahilum uses close-up images of rocks in a riverbed. Deo Arellano presents a series of digital prints. Datu Arellano features video work/installation and drawings. Call 6971015.

RUEL CAASI mounts his twin shows, "Signum" and "Wounds: Revisited," until April 13 at The Drawing Room (Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Avenue, Makati). "Signum" signals a new turn in Caasi's abstraction while the latter brings his viewers back to his "Wounds" series he started in 1997. Call 8977877 or 8976990.

THE AYALA Museum will hold a workshop on traditional Indian folk painting on April 2-23, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The workshop will explore the ancient techniques of drawing on cotton cloth and handmade paper known as *mahubani*. Participants will learn about the art of drawing Indian gods and goddesses, flowers, birds and animals from Hindu mythology. Nidhi Prakash, a freelance artist and teacher from India, will conduct the workshop. Call 7577117.

FERNANDO Sena and Romulo Galicano will conduct workshops dubbed "A Day With an Artist" on April 23 and 30, 3:30 p.m., at the fountain area of Greenbelt 3 Park. Fees include registration and an art kit. Pre-registration is accepted at Ayala Museum's info desk and at the Glorietta and Greenbelt 3 customer-service booths. Portrait and landscape artist Galicano will open the event on April 23 while still-life artist Sena will be featured on April 30. Call 7577117 to 21.

GREAT Image endorser Boy Abunda with owners Bob and Toots Paloma. Great Image Digital Photo Shop has been named the top photo and digital imaging company at the 21st annual Excellence Awards and the No. 1 photo services (national) honoree in the National Shoppers' Choice Awards. The shop has 25 branches in Luzon.

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New book defines the legacy of Pope John Paul II

John Paul II
Go in Peace

JOSEPH Durepos evaluates the legacy of Pope John Paul II in "Go in Peace; A Gift of Enduring Love."

Culling from apostolic letters and speeches, gathering prayers and reflections of the philosopher-theologian Pope, Durepos assembles a selection of texts gathered around themes most important to John Paul II.

From prayer to morality to the Eucharist, Durepos gives us a portrait of the man, using the very words that he himself uses, helping us understand what drives this extraordinary servant, inspiring us to serve as he does.

"Go in Peace" is available at Jesuit Communications' Tanging Yaman kiosks at the Sonolux Bldg. and Loyola House of Studies of the Ateneo de Manila University, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, and at the 2/L Gateway Mall in Quezon City, and leading bookstores nationwide. Call 4265971 to 72.

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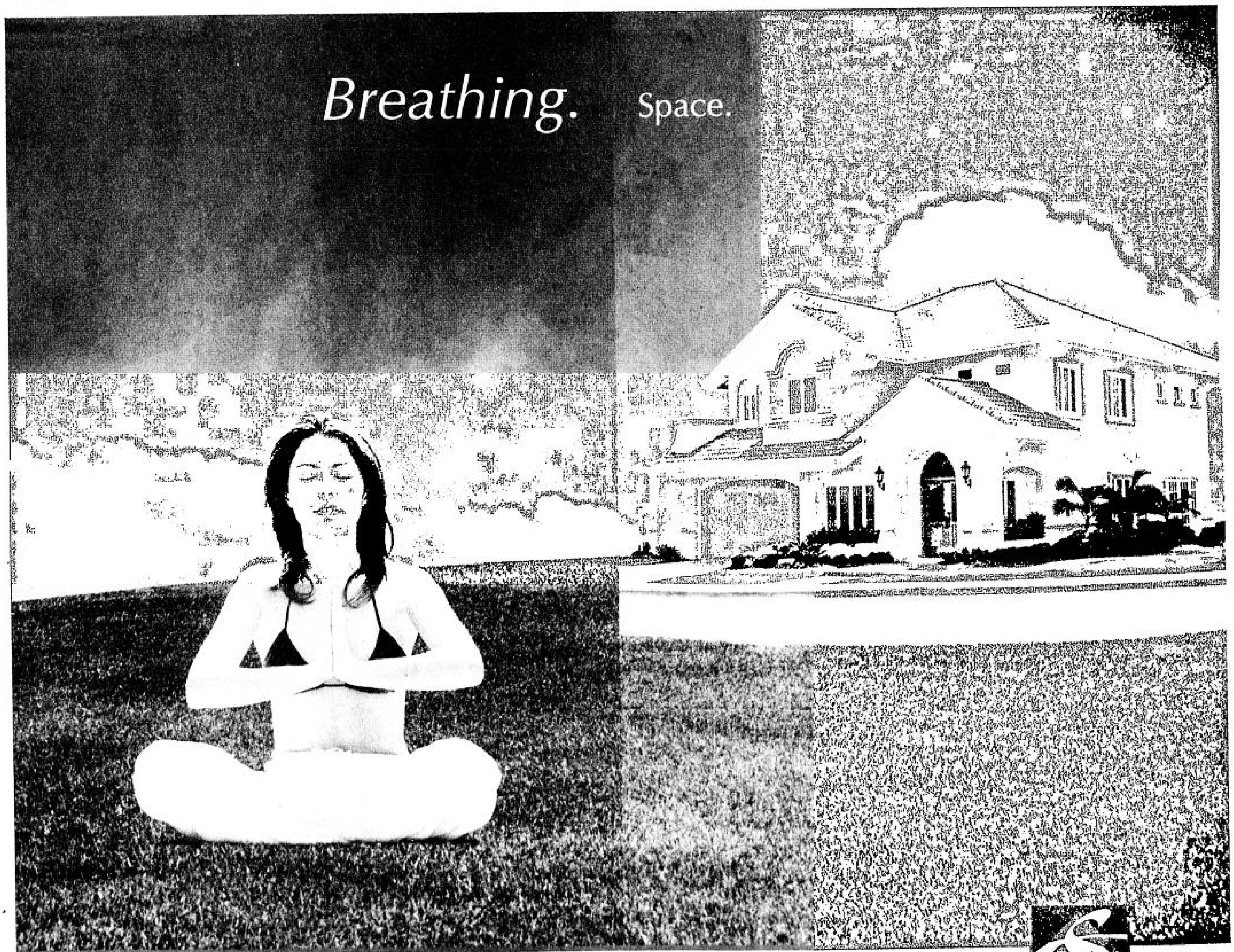
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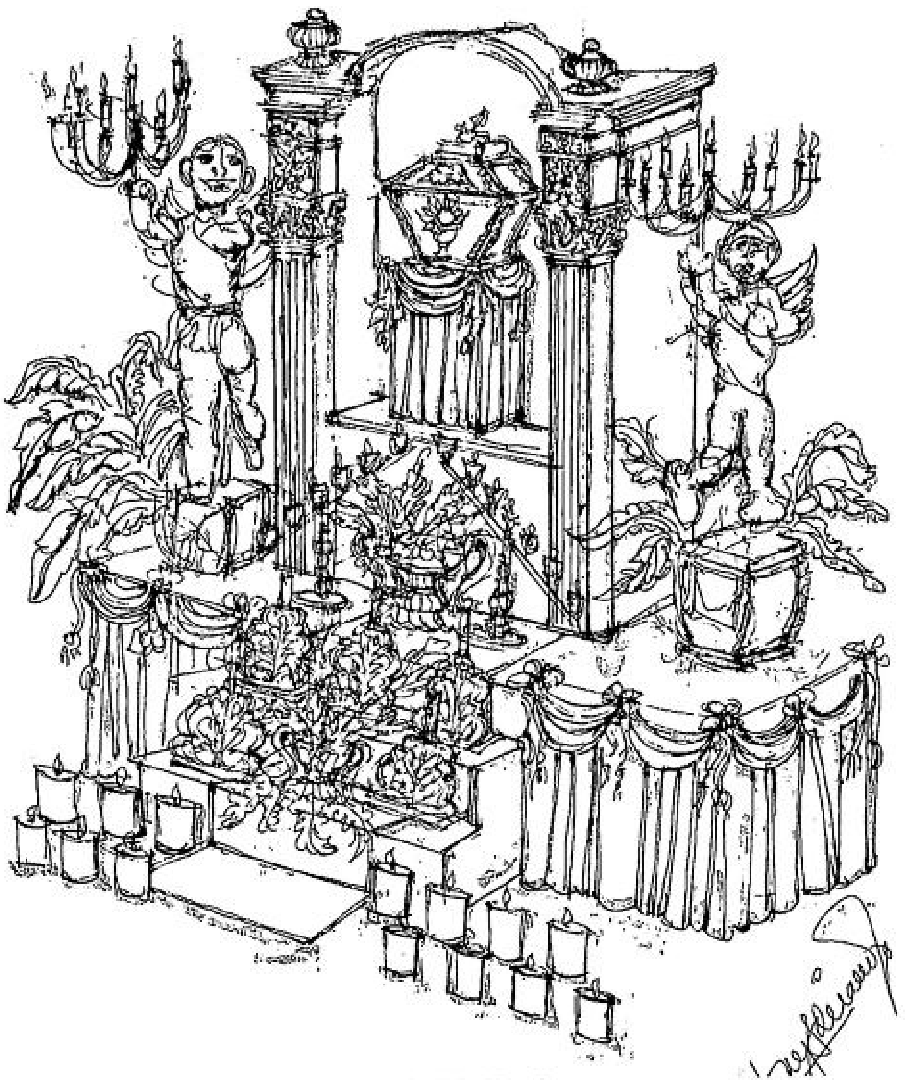

ALTAR of Repose at the Nuestra Señora de Guia Church

Altar of Repose central to Lent

The Maundy Thursday centerpiece of the Ermita church in Manila was a showcase of faith and art

LAST Maundy Thursday only the Chrism Mass and the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper were permitted. The Chrism Mass took place on Thursday morning. It was one of the principal expressions of the fullness of the bishop's priesthood and signified the close unity of the priests with him. During this Mass the bishop consecrated the Chrism and blessed the other oils.

On the same day, the Easter Triduum began with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaching its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closed with the evening prayer on Easter Sunday. After communion, a ciborium with hosts for Good Friday was left on the altar. Following the prayer after communion, a procession took place, transferring the Holy Eucharist to the Altar of Repose. It was not allowed to expose the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance, or even in a ciborium.

The faithful were encouraged to adore the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable period of time during the night but no solemn adoration after midnight was allowed.

After this transfer, the Altar of Repose took center stage.

Maundy Thursday was also the day when Filipinos of all walks of life felt the solemnity of Lent. It saw the start of the traditional Visita Iglesia. The faithful moved from one church to another. At each stop of church visitation, the faithful prayed momentarily at the Altar of Repose then moved on to the next church. Some went through seven church visitations, some 13, 14 and even 15 churches. This left many at a quandary as to what exactly was the number of church visits is required. However, as this writer found out, there is no exact number required by the Church.

In this view, parishes around Metro Manila seemed to outdo each other in the design and execution of their Altar of Repose. Some parishes would be arrayed so simply, bare and empty of external decoration. Others would go beyond the traditional norm, and make their Altar of Repose a socio-economic-political statement. Others would be so breathtakingly beautiful that it would literally divert your attention from the object of adoration, but instead rivet your attention on the beauty of the design and execution. Others would be so dramatic and theatrical that you would have difficulty in finding the ciborium!

ALTAR/ D4

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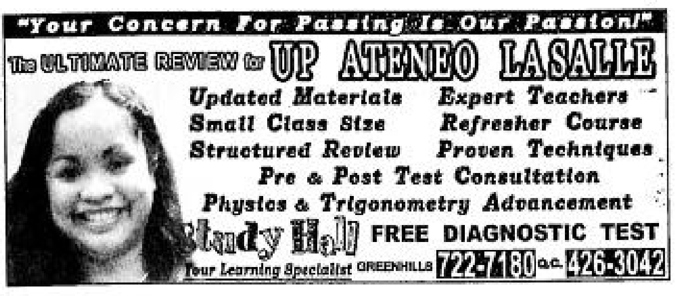
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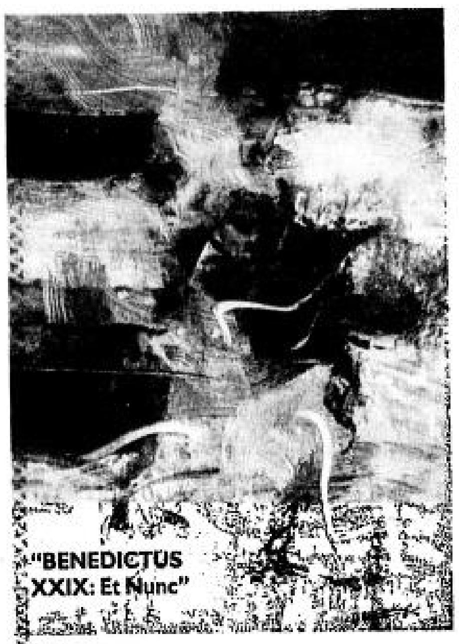
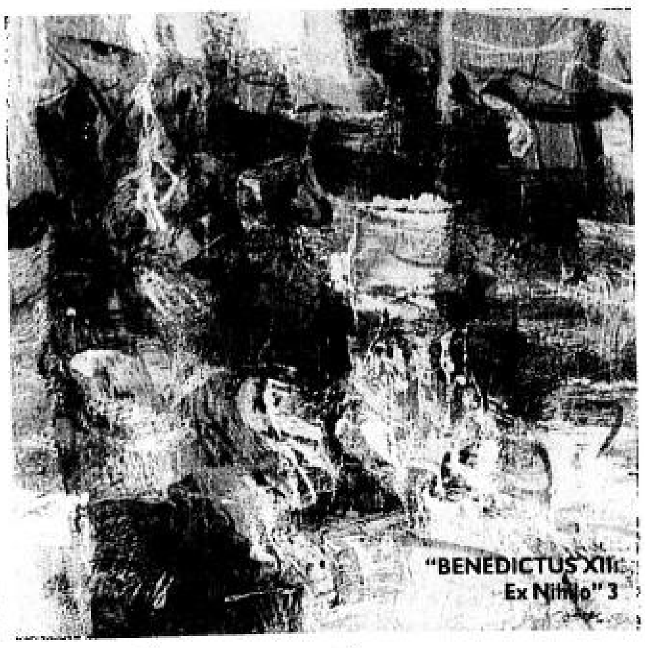
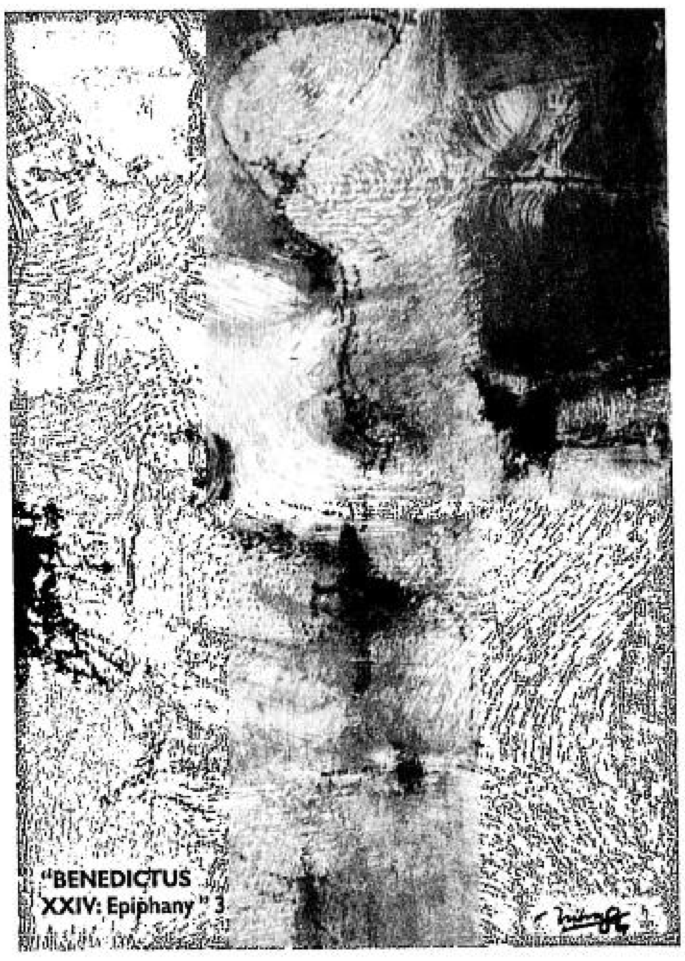

"BENEDICTUS XXIX: Et Nunc"

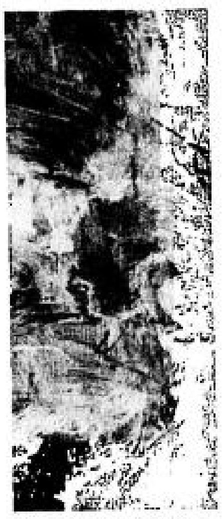

"BENEDICTUS XII: Ex Nihilo" 3

EDWIN Wilwayco


"BENEDICTUS XXIV: Epiphany" 3

From catharsis into beatitude

By Constantino C. Tejero


"BENEDICTUS X: Laudamus" 4

CERTAINLY one of our finest abstractionists is Edwin Wilwayco.

He is notable for his rich colorism, often in monotone, whether it be depicting a still life of pineapple or the imagined color of the wind, or simply expressing the blues. Then there is that sense of sweeping or languid movement perceptible in every piece.

Wilwayco's art has been labeled as belonging to Abstract Expressionism, but his is not really the gestural art of the American Abstract Expressionists. We'd say it belongs more to the lyrical abstraction of the postwar German abstractionists, a wholly different lot antagonistic to Abstract Expressionism.

In each piece the viewer discerns the rigorous control of the brushstrokes and perceives a rigid pattern in the shapeless mass. In Wilwayco's hand, the delicacy of line and wispiness of form give the impression of something diaphanous, transparent, fragile.

In early works, he revealed a tendency to abstracting concrete things, such as the pineapple, the Philippine flag, the jeepney, birds-of-paradise.

Of late he's been moving toward total abstraction, not only in style but also in subject. He recently held successive exhibits exploring mood ("Blues") and depicting an invisible force of nature ("Whispering Winds").

A further progression was his latest exhibit "Benedictus," 33 pieces in oil on paper, in The Crucible Gallery, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

This transition a critic has described as "more like an ascent—from catharsis into beatitude."

Now the artist is ready to tackle something really abstract. And what could be more abstract than divine grace—and how to show this but as light, in warm rich color?

(Everything fits. Theme, subject matter and style naturally suit the artist's sensibility and temper like a second skin.)

Wilwayco uses Latin for his paintings' titles, obviously to add more gravitas to the already profound theme: the artist blessed by God. The exhibit then is a homage to his Creator.

The pieces may be broadly divided into three parts, depicting some kind of progression from light to dark, or vice versa.

The first are warm bright paintings in the artist's characteristic gestural strokes and rich tone of yellow, orange, red. Here belong pieces such as "Luminans," "Epiphany," "De Lumine," "Te Deum."

The second comprises pieces such as "Ex Nihilo" and "Laudamus," in black, off-white, and a kind of red drained of warmth, almost brown.

Bridging them are pieces like "Et Nunc," in gray, beige, black, dull orange and red, like sunset deepening into night. Or, like the first false light of dawn.

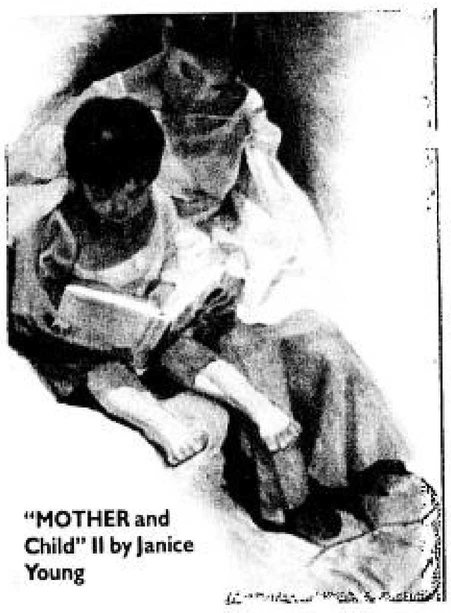
Wilwayco paints early in the morning. That quiet interlude before dawn is naturally conducive to meditation on the Divine.

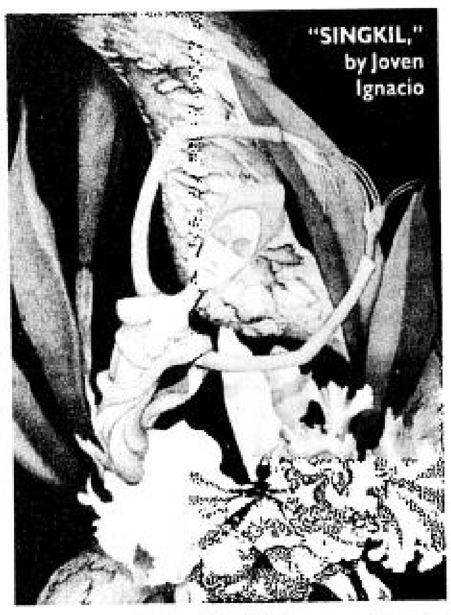
"I like to think my paintings are divinely inspired," he intimates, "for I believe I cannot solely rely on what I know."

Wilwayco graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts. He took further studies at the Continental Schools Design Studies in Los Angeles, California, then in West Surrey College of Art and Design in England.

He received the Thirteen Artists Award in 1994.

Wilwayco works as chief creative officer in an advertising agency. It's remarkable that, with a nine-to-five job, he has not neglected his art but still finds time to paint, gives thanks for this gift and blessing, and pays a homage-exhibit to the Gift-Giver.


"MOTHER and Child" II by Janice Young


"SINGKIL," by Joven Ignacio

(FIRST row) Tito Sanchez, Araceli Limcaco Dans and Felipe Mayoya; (second row) Angelo Baldemor, Janice Young and Joven Ignacio; (third row) Aladin Antiqueño and Azor Pazcoguin

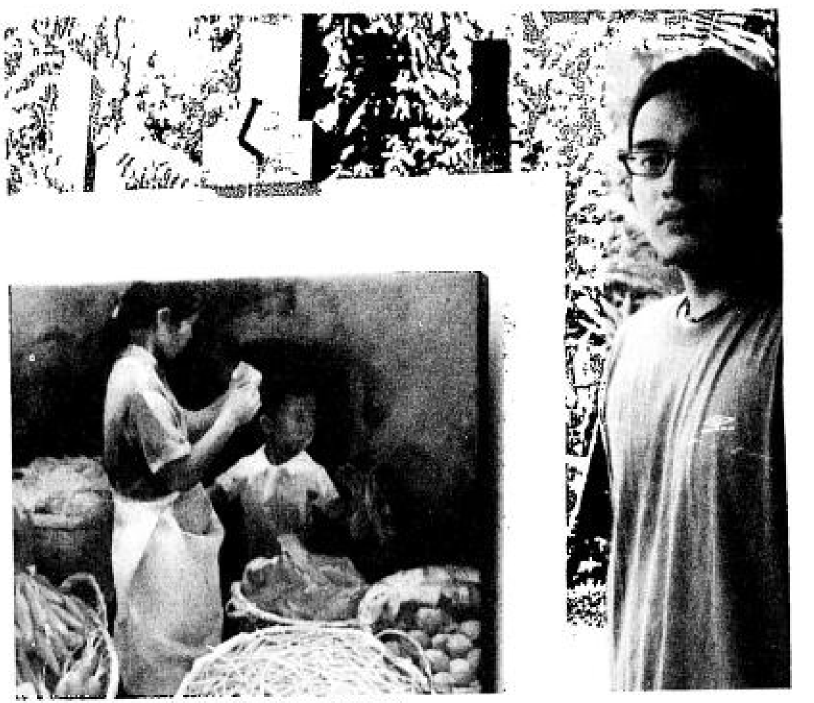
Dans and company exhibit at Baguio Country Club

EIGHT outstanding visual artists are displaying their works at the Baguio Country Club until April 1 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Club.

Topping the list of outstanding artists is Araceli Limcaco Dans, painter and art educator. "We have been drawing and painting together for the past four years," said Dans, "and as we painted landscapes, seascapes, portraits, nudes and still life in various media, these activities have helped us improve our craftsmanship without hampering our individual style and creativity.

"It is so wonderful to exchange ideas with fellow artists. Our mutual love for art has bonded us together and we have learned to accept each others' virtues and faults unconditionally. We have also learned to synchronize self-imposed discipline with artistic freedom. This exhibit will probably reflect what I'm talking about."

Other participants in the "Ciento" art exhibit are Aladin Antiqueño, Angelo Baldemor, Joven Ignacio, Felipe Mayoya, Azor Pazcoguin, Tito Sanchez and Janice Young.


AZOR Pazcoguin with "Kulay ng Buhay"

Beneficiary of the exhibit is Migi's Corner Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to improving the living conditions of sick children in charity wards of public hospitals. Call the Baguio Country Club at (074) 4425060 to 68 or e-mail baguiocountryclub@philwebinc.com or call the Manila office at (02) 4008387, or fax 5265105.

Clinic's tips on interior design

WHEN Belen Morey, together with Ched Topacio, Cora Coco and Sonia Olivarez pioneered interior design education in the country in the 1960s, they knew it would spark a new direction among art-inclined Filipinos.

Morey recalled that the University of Santo Tomas was the only institution offering a two-year Pilar Mabanta course on Home Economics. From there, they drafted the curriculum for a four-year course on Interior Design, bringing home the skills and know-how they had acquired from studies at the New York School of Interior Design.

"We prepared the curriculum and offered it first in UST. The University was already aggressive in offering new courses from abroad for Filipino students," said the former Assistant Dean of the UST College of Architecture and Fine Arts.

BLIMS president Sammy Lim

"We wanted to educate students who would eventually make it known to as many Filipinos as possible that interior design was a profession and the design of a home should be carefully thought of. We wanted people to know the difference between an interior decorator and an interior designer."

From UST, Morey said, they also helped establish the course at the Assumption College and Holy Spirit. Links with universities abroad such as Japan and the United States were made to offer exchange programs for students.

Also an executive director of the Philippine Institute of Interior Design (PIID), Morey now collaborates with Blims Fine Furniture president Samie Lim to further interior design education in the country through unconventional venues.

In 2002, they formed the Creative Training and Review Center at the Blims Fine Furniture shop on Ayala Avenue. The review is conducted yearly for Interior Design students who will be taking up their licensure examinations.

Today, they have again teamed up for the "Design Clinic" at Blims branch in Greenbelt 1. The concept behind this new project, Lim said, is just as simple as the basic human reaction when one is ailing.

"You go to the doctor when you are sick. It is the same way here. You come to us to consult with a professional interior designer to remedy your crammed or cluttered house. Blims is making the country's top and budding interior designers available to the public though this endeavor."

Apart from the "Design Clinic," Blims and the PIID are holding an exhibit at the new Ortigas Home Depot showcasing PIID designers' takes on condo living.

Morey leads the roster of participating senior interior designers, which include Gelen Kuizon, Necita Cheng, Lot Hilvano, Celynn Imperial, and Emma Viray.

The line-up of junior interior designers include Ching Belleza, Leah Chua Marja Corcuerra, Toni Gabriel, Dottie Gosingko, Julie Ann de Lara, Jane dela Paz and Marybeth Ting.

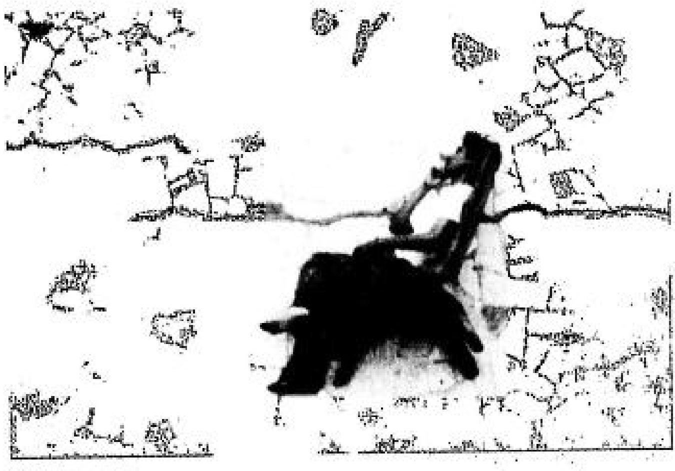
Six spaces each resembling a condominium unit were designed by a tandem of a senior and junior interior designers according to themes. The duo of Morey and De la Paz applied the country-style concept to a two-bedroom unit model.

BLIMS executive vice president Carrie Lim, interior designer Johnny Hubilla, and PIID executive director Belen Morey

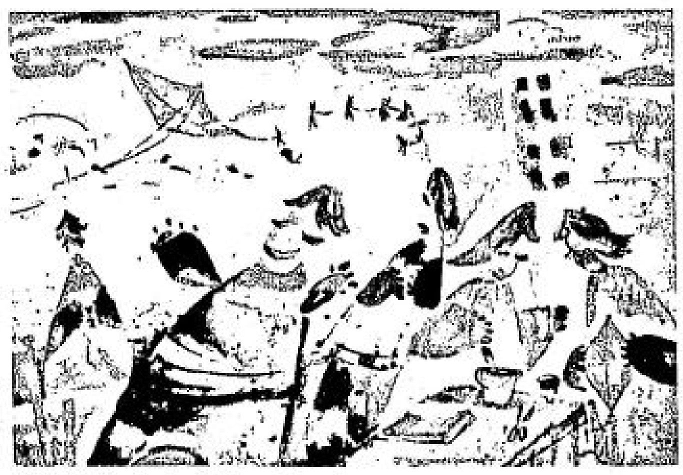
The rest of the teams designed units with themes ranging from tropical zen (Kuizon), oriental (Cheng and Alonzo), contemporary (Hilvano and Gosingko) eclectic (Imperial and Corcuerra), to an office setting (Viray and Chua).

Consultation sessions with senior associates and junior associates are available at affordable rates for customers who buy Blims products.

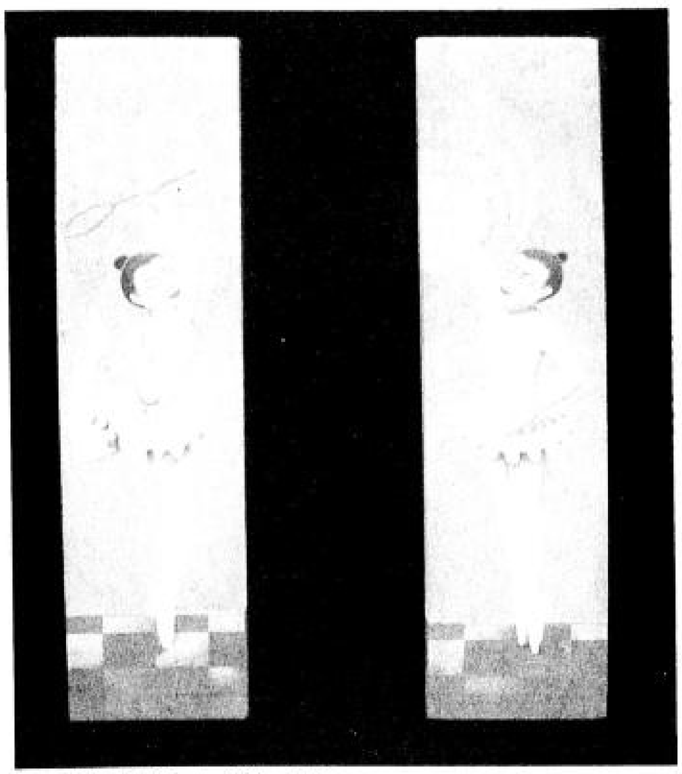
Call 7172267 or visit Blims Fine Furniture at Greenbelt 1.



JEF Samonte

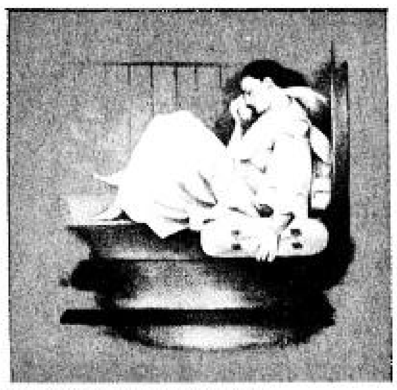


"LARO" Series by Anthony Fermin



"FRAGILE & M Butterfly" by Bin Samonte

Male artists donate works for raffle against prostitution



"SK8R Girl" by Jef Samonte

REX Tatlonghari

ACCORDING to statistics, 400,000 women, including 70,000 children, were involved in prostitution in the Philippines in 1998 alone.

In the exploitative system of prostitution, bar owners and pimps make the most profit while the women are most exposed to abuse, as well as physical, emotional and psychological trauma.

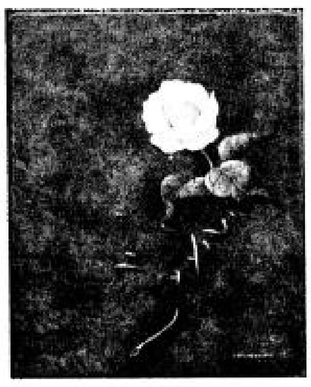
The absence of punitive measures for the male customers abets the abuse of women.

Samaritana Transformation Ministries, Inc. (www.samaritana.org), a non-governmental religious organization that has been working among women in prostitution in the Philippines for 12 years, will hold a fund-raising dinner and art raffle on April 2 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko Ballroom in Makati City.

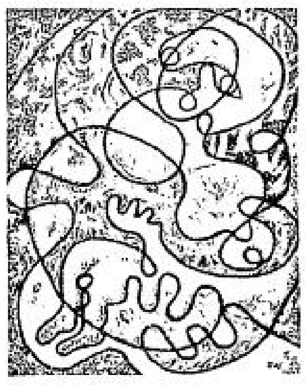
Male artists who have donated artworks for the raffle include painters Malang, Liongoren, Gregory Raymond Halili, Marking Que, Ferdinand Doctolero, Nonoy Duran, Jojo Lastimosa, Anthony Fermin, Rex Tatlonghari, Jef Samonte, Bin Samonte, Tres Roman, Chit Ramirez, Michael Crisostomo and Jed Escueta; potter Hadrian Mendoza; and photographers Marlon Despues and Joachim Bondoc. A Legazpi painting has also been generously donated for the art raffle.

Only 200 tickets will be sold at P 5,000 each, inclusive of dinner. Special guest is Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Juliano-Soliman. Song numbers will be rendered by Carla Martinez and Carlo Orosa.

Program starts promptly at 7 p.m. Call Samaritana at 938-1617 or elefax 431-5771. Email info@samaritana.org, or visit www.samaritana.org.



"PEACE Process," by Rex Tatlonghari



"MOTHER and Child," by Tres Roman

BIN Samonte

TRES Roman

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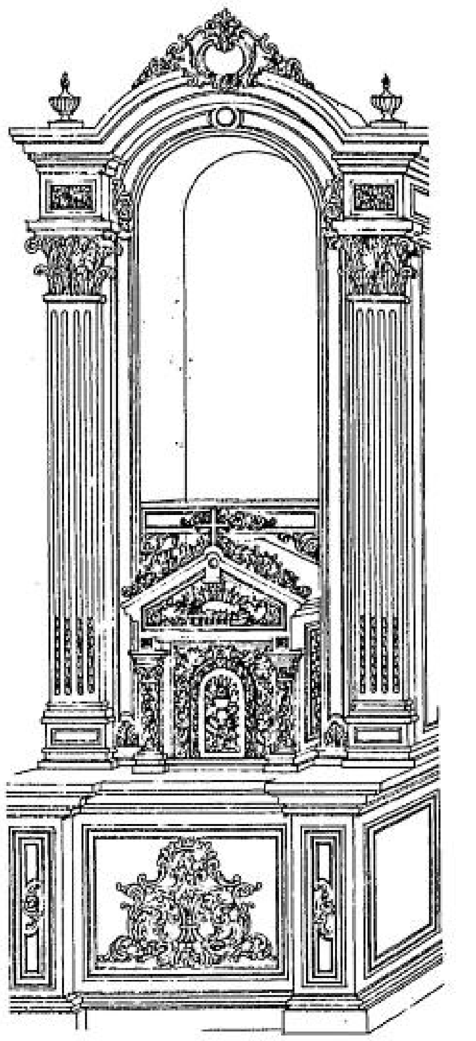
SIDE altar by Tony Adriano

Altar . . .

From page D1

Oldest Marian image

Ermita Parish prides itself for housing the oldest Marian Image in the Philippines. Its patroness and titular, "La Nstra. Sra. Virgen de Guia" (Our Lady of Guidance) is reportedly to have been found by Legazpi's men alongside shores of Manila in 1571. The "little brown virgin" is said to be the patroness of seafarers and mariners.

Ironically, Ermita is the center of shipping companies and manning houses in Manila.

Ermita also prides itself for having one of the best and most beautiful Altars of Repose in the Archdiocese of Manila. Thanks to a devotee, a native Ermitano, who happens to be one of the Philippines top interior designers, Tony Adriano. Parishioners and devotees are always in eager anticipation of how the Altar of Repose would turn out.

This year's design centered on an antique silver tabernacle housing the ciborium with hosts. Similarly two antique silver angel candelabras, each with 13 candlesticks, flanked both sides. Each article placed on the tableau had a distinct story of its own, adding to the majesty and regalness of the whole assembly. Antique angels of solid *narra* complemented the entire design.

These wooden angels seemed to have been specifically made for the purpose, since their fingers pointed toward tabernacle while the faces looked towards the faithful as if saying, "Here He rests." These figures and other ornamentations were strategically placed that it directed the eyes of the adoring faithful to the object of veneration and did not in any way distract attention in the prayer vigils.

The soft candle glows and the glaring spotlights added drama and subtlety to the tableau. Lights ingenuously placed lent the tabernacle a supernatural radiance, rendering a calming effect that soothes the senses, making it conducive to meditation and prayer.

The singular beauty of this tableau was enhanced by the extensive use of flowers, arranged in a manner that characterized subdued elegance. Adriano refused to mention names of donors who generously contributed the flowers.

Yellow and gold, white and silver were these year's predominant colors. There was a subtle joy in this sorrowful moment. Joy in sorrow was the mood as the faithful awaited the glorious promise of the Lord's Resurrection.

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JEREMY Domingo as Orin Scrivello and Liesl Batucan as Audrey (left); Joel Trinidad as Seymour, the nebbish guy with a green thumb played by Rick Moranis in the movie (top)

Mean green show it ain't

Rep mounts a manic and silly 'Little Shop of Horrors'—with mixed results

By Gibbs Cadiz

In his original notes to "Little Shop of Horrors," the rousing, Motown-charged Off-Broadway hit he created with composer Alan Menken before the pair became Disney-fied with "The Little Mermaid" and "Beauty and the Beast," the late librettist Howard Ashman wrote:

"'Little Shop of Horrors' satirizes many things: science fiction, B movies, musical comedy itself, and even the Faust legend. There will, therefore, be a temptation to play it for camp and low comedy. This is a great and potentially fatal mistake..."

Given these cautionary words, it is altogether perplexing that Repertory Philippines, in its latest production of the enduring musical now running until April 3 at Onstage Theater in Greenbelt 1 (tel. 8870710), fails to find the sweetly naive, tongue-in-cheek vein of "Little Shop of Horrors." Instead, it goes for precisely the kind of campy, laboriously silly hi-jinks Ashman had warned against.

Sincere nostalgia

The last time Rep had mounted this show, in 1992 at the William J. Shaw Theater with Aiza Seguerra playing one of three tykes that served as young counterparts to the show's signature Supremes-like Greek chorus, the production got it marvelously right by feeding off the sincere, affectionate nostalgia that served as both spine and spirit of the musical.

It helped, too, that that production had superior actors, principally Jon-jon Briones as Seymour and Lyon Roque as Orin Scrivello.

The slightly-built but spectacularly-voiced Roque played the sadistic dentist with menacing glee, and that made considerable difference in a musical whose original stage incarnation is markedly darker and more cynical than the sanitized movie version.

No such luck in the current show directed by Baby Barredo. Rep has updated "Little Shop of Horrors" by stripping away the patina of shabby, soul-tinged glamour associated with it.

The three chorus girls (played here by Amparo Sietereales, Myrene Hernandez and Marisse Borlaza), so vital an element in capturing the joyously zany, '60s-inspired rhythms of the material, are now cheerleaders clad in flared skirts and knee socks. They sing, they belt, they bellow, but there is no hint of sweaty soul or sublime gospel in their music-making.

Then there is Jeremy Domingo, who plays Orin Scrivello. Domingo has a rich, plummy voice, feather-light feet and the heft of a bouncer. But he seems unable to resist italicizing these assets with a needlessly puffed-up performance full of arched mugging and conscious poses.

Orin Scrivello, like Danny Zuko in "Grease," is a wicked send-up of iconic leather-clad Hollywood rebels such as Dean and Brando. But in Domingo's hands, he's just Johnny Bravo—a bland posturing cartoon.

Accomplished Audrey

But let's be fair. Domingo's hammy turn isn't enough to sink "Little Shop of Horrors," thanks in large part to the oxygen he gets every time he's in the same scene with Liesl Batucan, who is an accomplished Audrey.

Batucan seems born to play this role. Patty Manahan in the 1992 production had the better voice, but Batucan's performance is powerfully affecting, because in many ways it is a

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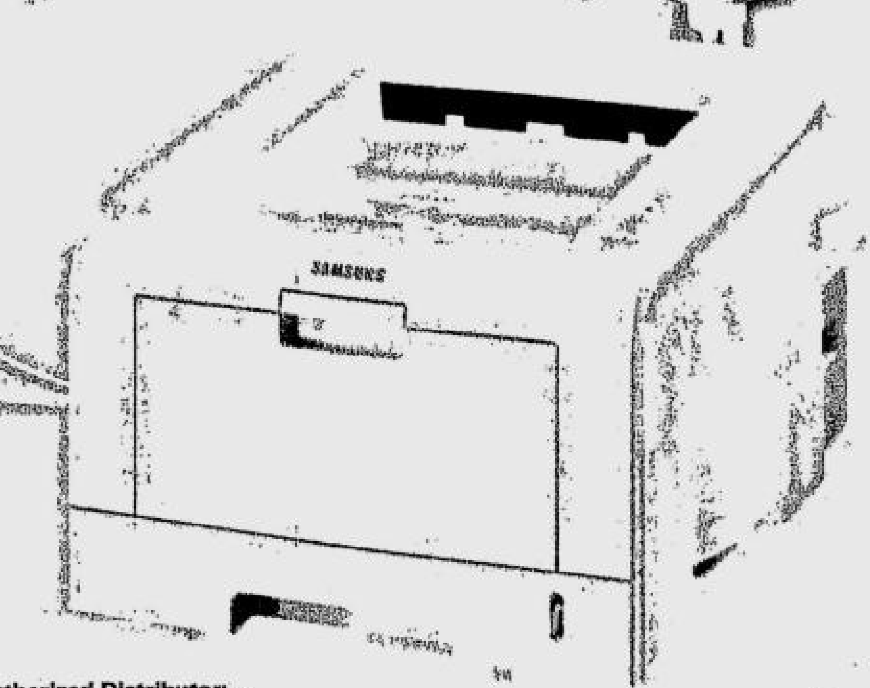

MICHAEL Williams, Pinky Amador and Miguel Faustmann in Rep's "Oh, Romeo!"

February's National Arts Month made sure the arts scene was alive and well

THE WOMEN of Tanghalang Pilipino's "Yun na nga!" Catherin Racsag, Skyzx Shannah Labastilla and Wenah Nagales

First-quarter report card on the performing arts

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

IT WAS a dizzying first quarter in the performing arts, propelled by February being the national month for arts and letters (and of love).

The Cultural Center of the Philippines threw open its doors on Feb. 13 and gave audiences a sneak preview, for free, of performances by Ballet Philippines, Philippine Ballet Theater, Tanghalang Pilipino, the Bayanihan, Ramon Obusan Folkloric Dance Co., Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO), University of Santo Tomas Symphony Orchestra, Philippine Madrigals and other groups.

Trust PPO music director Eugene Castillo to introduce audiences to works, often contemporary, that are unfamiliar yet appealing.

In "Symphonic Colors," for instance, the only familiar piece was Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring." The other compositions were by Korean composer Sukhi Kang (who was present), Joseph Suk of Czech and John Adams of the US. Pianist Aileen Chanco rose brilliantly to the challenge of playing Adams' fiery, difficult concerto (incidentally she used a score).

The second PPO concert saw master conductor Oscar C. Yatco in a rare jovial and relaxed manner, but his movements were as brisk and as authoritarian (I mean authoritative) as ever. It was a wonderful evening of Philippine music during the first half of the 20th century.

One of the compositions played was the ground-breaking Igorot Rhapsody by Angel Peña (who also took a bow). Peña, 84, also composed the lovely kundiman "Sa Iyo Kailan Pa Man," and it is time for the cultural powers-that-be to give him his due while he is still around.

In the next PPO concert conducted by Castillo, "Silenced Voices of Peace and Protest," Yatco, who was in the audience, loudly cheered American cellist John Walz, who played Ernest Bloch's Schelomo: "Rhapsodie Hebraique for Cello and Orchestra."

Now on its 30th year, the International Bamboo Organ Festival at the Las Piñas City Parish Church "is the longest-running international musicfest in the world," declared pianist Della G. Besa of the Bamboo Organ Foundation in a press conference. The organizers have every reason to be proud of this achievement.

JUSTIN Aquino as Cyrano de Bergerac

MARIO O'Hara as the befuddled Lamberto in TP's "Yun na Nga!"

BAMBOO Organ Festival bamboo conductor Miles Morgan

Major works played during the festival included the stirring "Stabat Mater" and the mighty "In Gloria Dei." These were given an inspired rendering by Miles Morgan conducting formidable Filipino talents: members of the PPO, the Ateneo Chamber Singers (headed by baritone Jonathan Velasco), and soloists Rachelle Gerodias, Katrina Saporsantos, Agnes Barredo, Ronan Ferrer, Velasco; and (organist) Armando Salarza.

Stunning

With her stunning looks and vocal histrionics, foremost soprano Gerodias proved again that she is an artist of international caliber. She later teamed up with tenor Nolyn Cabahug for a singing "duel" that drew ovations from the audience at the Phil-Am Life Auditorium during the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra's "Operasissimo," with Velasco as guest conductor. Ah, opera is truly the most thrilling of the musical art forms.

The front act that evening was The Muzikitos, a large group of children from low-income families, all talented violinists, who dream of a college degree and of becoming professional musicians someday. MPO (tel. 705-1728) founder and principal conductor Rodel Colmenar has sounded a call for the music-loving public to help The Muzikitos realize their dream.

The Korean community came out in full force for "Experience Paris," another MPO concert featuring the noted Korean flutist Hae Won Shin. The repertoire was French, but where was the French community? Oh well, they were probably represented by French-trained, French-speaking flutist Antonio Maigue, playing unobtrusively in the woodwind section although he is a veteran of solo concerts.

The torch waved aloft by National Artist Lucio D. San Pedro has been passed on to his grandson Gabrielle San Pedro-Rojas, also a composer-conductor, during the graduation (Santa Isabel Conservatory) recital of his (Rojas') own works. Bravura pieces included "Variations on a Theme of (Julio) Nakpil" and "Kung Tuyo Na Ang Luha Mo, Aking Bayan," with choral support, and based on a famous poem by National Artist Amado V. Hernandez.

The star of the dark Repertory Philippines musical "The Little Shop of Horrors" (directed by Baby Barredo, Greenbelt's OnStage) was really the gigantic, carnivorous plant designed by Johann Quisumbing, effectively voiced over by Raul Montesa (who has a fine singing voice) and Meynard Peñalosa, and manipulated by Arnel Carrion and Franz Imperial. The puppet-plant was constructed by Ariez Capistrano.

Cyrano de Bergerac, that French character with a big heart and an even bigger nose, has long been an acting challenge for Ateneo de Manila thespians. The latest to essay this role— and in a spellbinding performance at that—is Justin Aquino, in a Dulaang Sibol production directed by the legendary Onofre Pagsanghan, my high school teacher eons ago. Will young Aquino be a new Vic Silayan?

Pinky Amador shines

Although still grieving over the death of her aunt-mentor Zeneida Amador, Pinky Amador attacked her role (roles, actually) with gusto in Rep's "Oh Romeo" (written by Ephraim Kishon and directed by Joy Virata). The play's humor was outrageous, ranging from silly to uproarious.

Virata, incidentally, was a riot in another Rep comedy "Busybody" (by Jack Popplewell, directed by Michael Williams). And Liesl Bátucan successfully sublimated her effervescent personality to become a prissy, old-maidish secretary in love with her boss.

At the Far Eastern University, it was another festive month as the school observed its 77th founding anniversary. There were performances by the FEU Dance Troupe, FEU Pangkat Kawayan, FEU Theater Guild, FEU Drum and Bugle Corps, and the FEU Modern Dance Company. The organizer was the President's Committee on Culture, headed by the indefatigable Rustica Carpio.

Based on a Pirandello play, Tanghalang Pilipino's "Yun Na Nga" (directed by Herbert Go at CCP's Tanghalang Huseng Batute), a Filipino adaptation by Jerry Respeto, poked fun at the Pinoys' penchant for gossip and snacks, as in in-between meals. The Maid (Sonio Mirabueno) gamely distributed these goodies to the audience (but I think the kropeck I grabbed gave me an upset stomach).

A major Tanghalang Pilipino production, National Artist F. Sionil José's "Mass" adapted by Rodolfo Vera, turned out to be a triumph for Yul Servo ("Naglalayag"), playing the lead character Pepe Samson. It was engagingly directed by Chris Millado.

"Eva Peron" (at the RCBC Plaza Theater) was wicked political satire which rewrote history, enhanced by footage of the Marcoses, Hitler, Mussolini, Idi Amin and Osama Bin Laden. It was directed by Lito Casaje of Dramatis Personae for Alliance Francaise de Manille (originally written in French by the Argentine playwright known as Copi).

Over at the Star Theater, the evergreen ballet "Giselle," still gripping although viewed many times, may well be the swan song of dancer Osias Barroso, who apparently wants to concentrate on choreography and on teaching.

In their peasant pas-de-deux, demi-soloists Gerardo Francisco and Marian Faustino were much applauded. And they served notice that they (along with senior soloists Jerome Espejo and Sandra Lynn Hwang) are the heirs apparent of ballerina Lisa Macuja and of Barroso. The Ballet Manila season resumes later this year with "Swan Lake" and "La Fille Mal Guardeé."

UST Singers serenade Catanduanes

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Singers will perform in a concert on March 29, 7:30 p.m., at the St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish Church, Pandan, Catanduanes in connection with the Dinahit Festival. It will also perform on March 31, 7 p.m. at the Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral in Virac, Catanduanes.

Under the baton of professor Fidel Gener Calalang Jr., a professor of the UST Conservatory of Music, the internationally acclaimed UST Singers will showcase a repertoire of world-class choral music to the people of Catanduanes.

The UST Singers is known worldwide for its genius and incomparable artistry in choral music. Last year, the choir won the Excellence Avec Distinction, having garnered the highest score in the mixed choir category, and the Ville De Vevey Jury Prize for Best Programming and Interpretation at the Montreux International Choral Festival in Switzerland.

Also last year, for the second time, the UST Singers were chosen as the Best Choir at the World Choral Festival 2004 in Puebla, Mexico. They performed along with choirs from Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Mexico, Serbia and Montenegro, Portugal and Poland.

Also last year, Honolulu mayor Jeremy Harris declared Aug. 20 as UST Singers Day.

Next month, the choir will embark on its 11th international concert tour, touring South Korea and the United States.

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Mean green show it ain't

From page E1

gifted evocation of the ineradicable Ellen Green template.

And also because, to those who've watched Batucan in innumerable Rep plays, it is a demonstration that in various fleeting ways—the lift of a word, the glide of a note—she has again made a role her own.

The blonde, helium-voiced Audrey, a character straight out of an Ed Wood film, is always a tricky part to play: Make her too dumb or too weak and the audience ends up jeering at her. But Batucan manages to stake out a thoughtful balance of vulnerability and spaced-out sweetness in this retro Barbie, making her an odder but sexier object of desire.

Of the cast, Batucan seems truest to the flighty but deadpan spirit of "Little Shop of Horrors." Joining her in this slim corner is Meynard Penalosa as the voice of the man-eating plant, Audrey II.

Properly stentorian and authentically black in his vocal stylings, Penalosa deserves all the whoops he gets in the finale for making the voracious "mean green mother from outer space" (a song heard only in the film, by the way) practically the most compelling character in the musical. He is aided greatly by the amazing puppet manipulations of Franz Imperial. (Bravo, too, to set and puppet designer Johann Quisumbing.)

MARISSE Borlaza, Myrene Hernandez and Amparo Sietereales as the cheerleaders-cum-chorus girls, with Robbie Guevara as Mushnik and Niccolo Manahan alternating as Seymour

Too safe

But if this "Little Shop's" most interesting attraction is the funny puppet plant that sings and bops like a genuine Motown star, what does that make of the lead actor, Joel Trinidad, who plays the nebbish main character, Seymour?

Trinidad has proven himself a dependable actor in a string of shows with various theater companies, and his hard work and intelligence are not in doubt. What's in doubt, perhaps, is whether those same qualities are making his work in "Little Shop of Horrors" too safe and shoe-horned.

Trinidad has no spontaneous bone in his body, which means every gesture, every pratfall he executes looks exasperatingly calculated. He is too bluntly smart and direct for such a totem of guileless befuddlement as Seymour.

He also has a slim voice, but the role does not require powerhouse pipes. The problem is simpler: he comes off as too studied. So while Trinidad gives the role his all, sadly, he is unable to achieve true transcendence.

Which is something you can say as well for this "Little Shop of Horrors." Mildly diverting, good for a few chuckles and some sincere hoorays for Batucan and Penalosa, the show is, overall, manic, outsize and silly. Campy, in a word.

After the big disappointment that was "Fame," Rep has some serious spring cleaning to do to shore up its heretofore enviable musical-comedy credentials.

"Little Shop of Horrors" is a great musical ("Suddenly Seymour" should qualify as one of the best love duets of musical theater, right up there with the likes of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "People Will Say We're in Love" and "We Kiss in a Shadow," or Sondheim's "Unworthy of Your Love" from "Assassins"). But in its present form, it adds middling value to Rep's name. Worse, Ashman in heaven must be itching for a revamp.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

Cristine Coyiuto's lyrical pianism

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

CRISTINE COYIUTO
Piano

Elan is the hallmark of Cristine Coyiuto's pianism.

Her touch exudes an engaging lyricism, which she combines with a mature disposition that proceeds from an intelligent understanding of the pieces she plays.

Clear, clean and thorough was how she read her pieces in her recent solo recital at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Little Theater for the benefit of the music library of her alma mater, Santa Isabel College.

The program represented two mainstreams of stylistic idioms—the romantic and early 20th century music. The romantic works by Brahms, Schumann and Rachmaninoff demanded exquisite lyricism and a dash of virtuosity.

Such lyricism was also required in "Ondine" from Ravel's Gaspard de la Nuit, which was played in its entirety to cap the recital.

Mature dispatch

Coyiuto opened the program with Brahms' Klavierstucke, Op. 118, which consists of five miniature pieces. Rendering the work with mature dispatch, Coyuito showed intensity and a flowing continuity of musical lines that more than made up for power which was a bit wanting, especially in the "Romance" and the last"Intermezzo."

Big tones that are not caressed are simply not enough to make listening to Brahms a delight.

Schumann's opus, Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op. 26, followed Brahms' work. Interestingly, Schumann called Brahms the"young eagle" who, in a rather ironic twist of history, became enamored with the former's wife, Clara, a piano virtuoso of note.

Schumann suffered from emotional instability. The contrasting moods caused by his condition are reflected in the first movement of this particular work, which Coyiuto clearly chiseled out with a careful blending of virtuosity and fine musicianship.

She fired the "Intermezzo" with vigor and dashing elegance. She oozed with virtuosity in the final movement, capping the work with majesty. Without doubt, Coyiuto was in superb stance in this work.

She held on to the same disposition in Rachmaninoff's preludes, Nos. 5, 8, 10, 12 and 13, which were culled from the second set of Preludes, Op.32. She essayed the works with biting elegance.

French poem

Louis Thevenin, cultural assistant of the French embassy in Manila, read Aloysius Bertrand's poem Ondine in the original French. This time, a different music was heard. The rhythm was decisive, and the ebb and flow of the text was utterly graceful.

"Ondine," the music, hushed with utmost singing expressiveness that was etched by the left hand. There was neither harshness nor rigidity in the unfolding musical lines that unfolded like the "flowing liquid," that the poem spoke of.

Tonal balance defined the eeriness in "Scarbo," depicting the macabre portrait of death in the gallows, made more morbid by the bloody redness of the setting sun. The repeated tolling of the bell all the more conveyed the ghastly ambiance.

"Scarbo" was the litmus test of the pianist's mettle. Coyuito ran her fingers incisively but with rhythmic delicacy as she carved out contrasting tonalities with sharp hues to finish her playing with a bang, so to speak.

Sr. Emelita B. Pacubas, chair of Sta. Isabel's Piano Department, rightly spoke of the giftedness of the featured pianist, not only as a concert artist but also as a Christian with a big generous heart.

She is not just a gifted concert artist but also a Christian with a generous heart

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Anvil launches book on inner powers

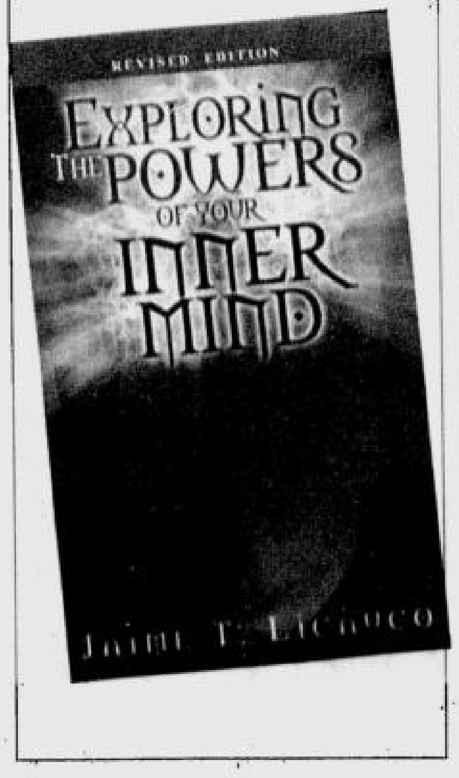
ANVIL Publishing Inc. will be launching "Exploring the Powers of Your Inner Mind" (revised edition) by Jaime L. Licauco on April 8, 6 p.m., at the PowerBooks, Greenbelt 4, Makati Avenue, Makati, and on April 15, 5:30 p.m. at Mag:net Plus ABS-CBN, G/F Eugenio Lopez Jr. Bldg., Mother Ignacia Street, Quezon City.

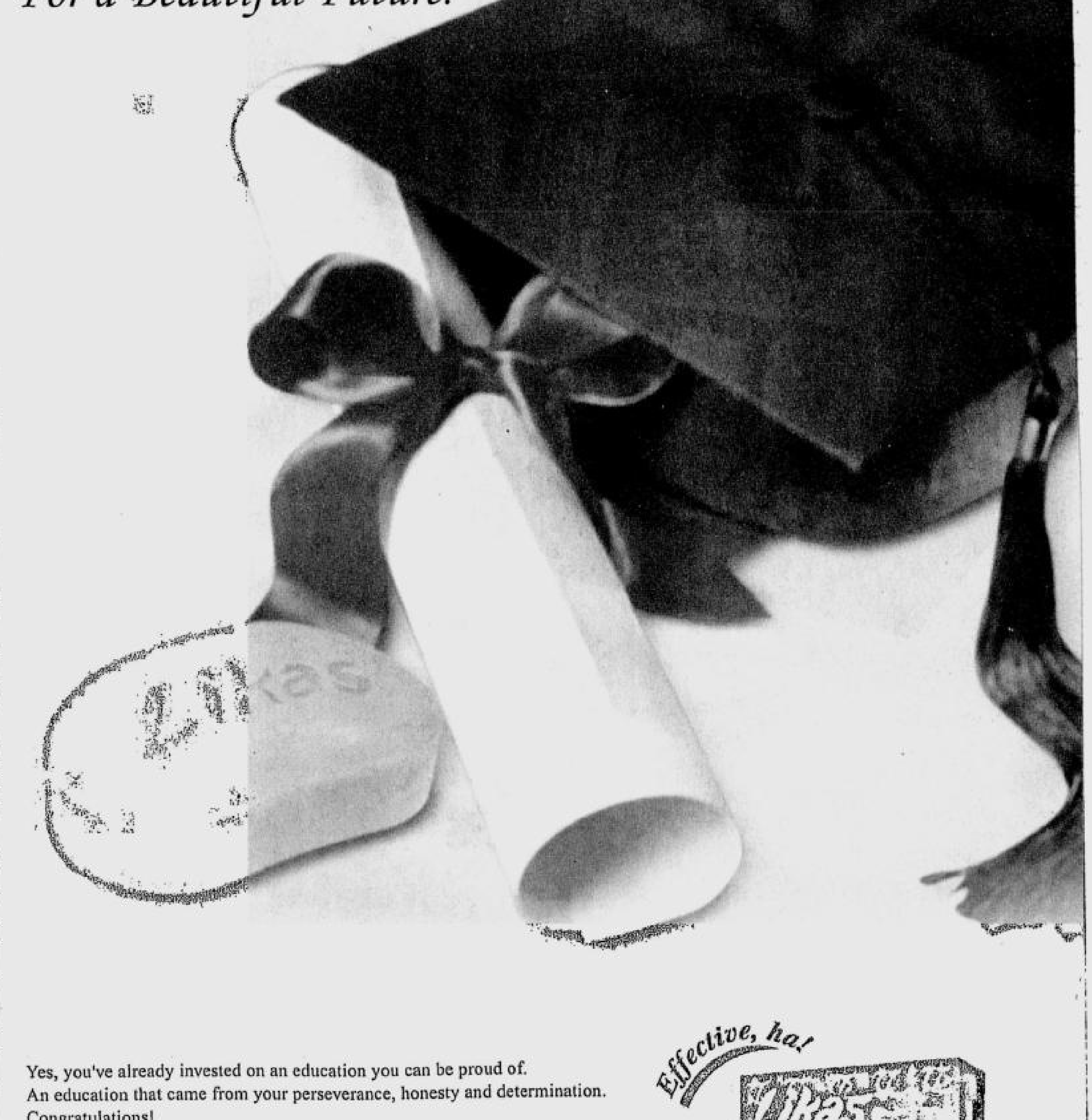
Internationally known lecturer and author Jaime Licauco covers familiar terrain and breaks new ground in the use of one's inner mind to make more money, anticipate and solve problems, heal oneself, see with the third eye, among others. The revised version will teach its readers proven methods in healing, solving problems through visualization, and using intuition in business and daily life.

"Exploring the Powers of Your Inner Mind" is a book for anyone who wants to make better and more effective use of mental facilities.

The author taught English, Philosophy, Christian Ethics and Sociology at San Beda College, Parapsychology at De La Salle University, and Intuitive Decision Making, Creativity, Remote Viewing and Telepathy in the postgraduate level at the Asian Institute Management. He has also authored 12 best-selling books.

He currently writes a weekly column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, anchors a weekly educational radio program over dzMM, conducts regular seminars on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Higher Awareness and lectures extensively.

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British Council holds creative workshops

THE BRITISH Council will hold summer workshops on creativity.

The Knowledge and Learning Centre (KLC) at Taipan Place will host a program on Shakespeare to be delivered by publisher Ani Almario and theater stalwart Nonie Buencamino in April.

On April 18-22, Almario will conduct a week-long workshop on "Reading Shakespeare." The 28-year-old product development officer of Adarna House is a member of the Philippine Board of Books for Young People and works closely with the National Book Development Board. She holds a degree in Economics and pursued her graduate studies at Stanford, where she developed a piece of software called "Youric," which was designed to help students gain vocabulary skills that would help them read Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

Buencamino will facilitate a "Shakespearean Acting" workshop on April 25-29 for 12-16 year-olds. A product of Tanghalang Ateneo and the Cultural Centre of the Philippines' Tanghalang Pilipino Actor's Company, Buencamino is best known for his sterling portrayal of a gay yuppie in the internationally-acclaimed film "Sibak." He was Elias in Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Rizal," and Emilio Aguinaldo in Ballet Philippines' dance-drama "La Revolucion Filipina."

On May 2-6. teachers from the Philippine High School for the Arts will conduct lessons on arts and crafts.

On the same week, string instrumentalists from the Cebu-based Peace Philharmonic Philippines and the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band will hold the Music Camp at Samba-Likhaan, to be facilitated by Scott Stroman, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's jazz department head. It will be capped by the "Mummy Dearest" concert on Mother's Day, May 8.

On May 16-27, Maxine Baker of the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield will conduct a two-week workshop series on documentary filmmaking at the Sonolux Studios of Jesuit Communications. Her workshops will feature lectures and hands-on exercises to demonstrate current approaches to documentary scriptwriting and directing, broken down into two modules: current trends in documentary filmmaking (May 16-20), and documentary scriptwriting and directing (May 23-27).

Enrollment is ongoing at the British Council, 10/F Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Pasig City. Call 91411011 to 14, extensions 110, 130 and 132.

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JASON Donovan
as Caractacus Potts

'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' is a charmer

The production, now playing in London, has been hailed by an English critic as 'the most fantasmagorical stage musical'

By Leah C. Salterio
Contributor

IF YOU watched the film "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" as a kid, you will certainly wax nostalgic and enjoy the musical of the same title, which is the current toast of the West End theater circuit in London—the same domain conquered by our very own Lea Salonga with "Miss Saigon" more than a decade ago.

Ian Fleming's "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" is based on Ken Hughes' 1968 film classic, starring Dick Van Dyke. The musical reprises the music by the Sherman Brothers (of "It's A Small World After All" fame), who earned an Oscar nomination for the film's title theme. Adrian Noble directs a cast of 40-plus in the musical.

Initially, it was rather unthinkable to picture a flying car onstage. It sure was easy to do it in the movies, but live theater is a totally different matter. Yet, Jeremy Sans' stage adaptation brings the imagination to reality—and how!

The fact that "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" became a popular big screen outing was enough reason to draw the crowds to the Palladium Theater, which is right in the heart of the bustling Picadilly Circus in London. However, the producers also decided to sign up popular artists to the production, so that with the names of '90s pop star Jason Donovan and Boyzone member Stephen Gately on the marquee, more audiences are drawn to the musical.

However, "Chitty

CHITTY/F3

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3
golf day!!!
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8
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9
fun in the sun
10
Cebu
buy mangoes
SOUTH EAST ASIAN AIRLINES
16
Palawan
nature trippin
17
visit college buddy
24
Siargao
just to see what's there
9
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27
28
29

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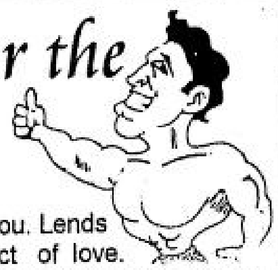

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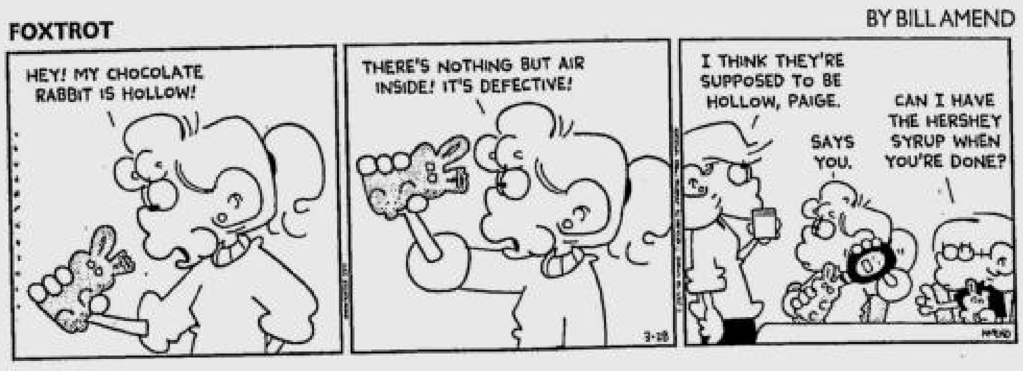
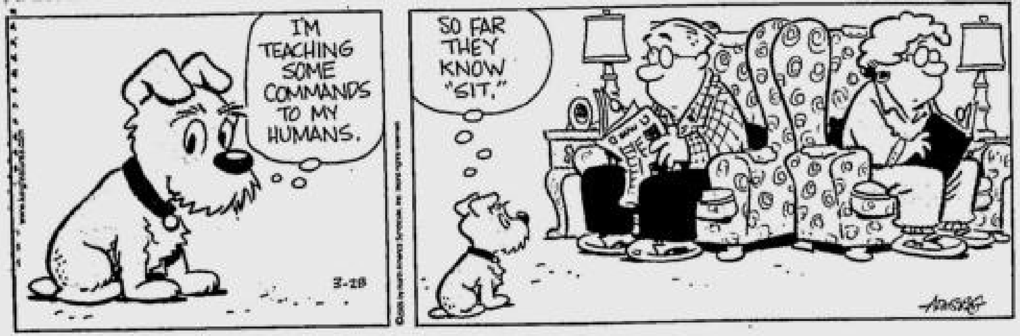
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HEY! MY CHOCOLATE RABBIT IS HOLLOW!
THERE'S NOTHING BUT AIR INSIDE! IT'S DEFECTIVE!
I THINK THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HOLLOW, PAIGE.
SAYS YOU.
CAN I HAVE THE HERSHEY SYRUP WHEN YOU'RE DONE?
3-28

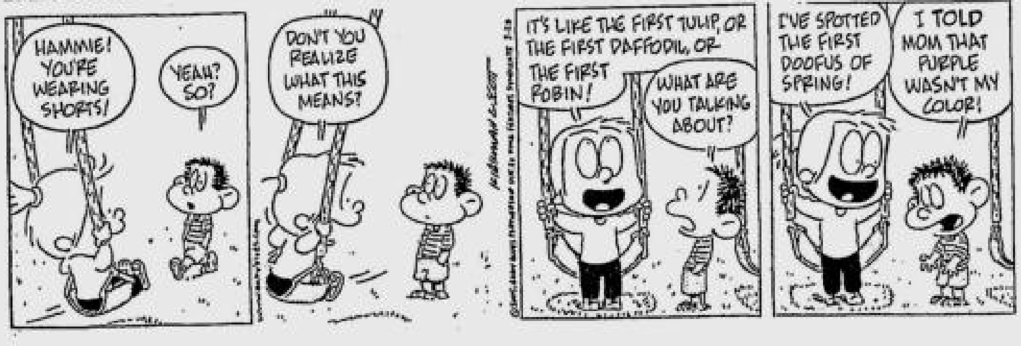
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M TEACHING SOME COMMANDS TO MY HUMANS.
3-28
SO FAR THEY KNOW "SIT."

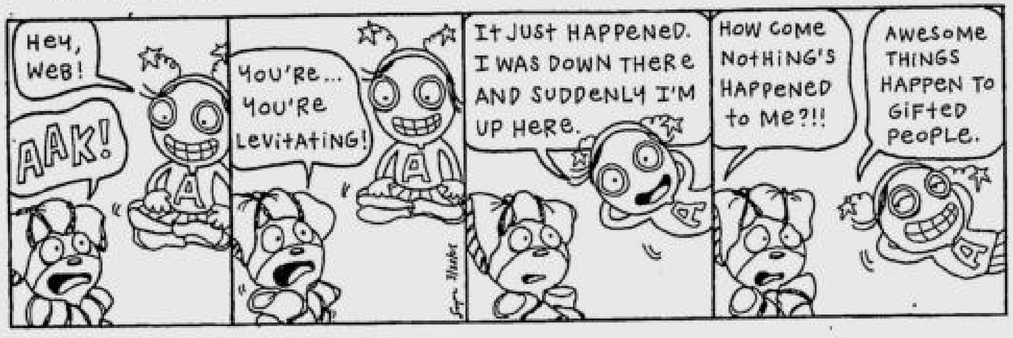
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HAMMIE! YOU'RE WEARING SHORTS!
YEAH? SO?
DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS?
IT'S LIKE THE FIRST TULIP, OR THE FIRST DAFFODIL, OR THE FIRST ROBIN!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'VE SPOTTED THE FIRST DOOFUS OF SPRING!
I TOLD MOM THAT PURPLE WASN'T MY COLOR!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WeB!
AAK!
You're... You're LevitAting!
It Just HAPPeNeD. I WAS DOWN THeRe AND SUDDeNLY I'M UP HeRe.
How come NotHiNG'S HAPPeNeD to Me?!!
Awesome THINGS HAPPeN To GifTeD PeoPLe.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You appear to be innocent in a lighthearted way, as if you are blithely unaware of where you are going. Nothing could be further from the truth! You are intent, focused and ambitious. Your friendships and relationships are meaningful to you; in turn, others are loyal to you. In fact, partnerships are your theme in this year. Birthdate of: Vince Vaughn, actor; Julia Stiles, actress; Reba McEntire, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You need to practice more patience. For whatever reason, you really identify with your opinions now. You're upset if others don't agree with you. (Even though you know this doesn't make sense.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your ability to research something is fabulous at the moment. You will ferret out any answer that you're looking for. Nothing is too much trouble!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with friends are lively today. Everyone is excited about something. You're putting your all into everything you have to say. (And you find this invigorating and exciting!)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Discussions with parents and bosses are possibly quite heated now. Best to be agreeable. There's too much at stake. Why win the battle and lose the war?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You passionately cling to some kind of belief right now—perhaps political or religious. It's OK to do this. But you don't have to persuade everyone else to agree with you. (Because they won't.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have the right mind-set now to tackle boring, red-tape details related to insurance matters, estates, wills, inheritances, debt and taxes. Get as much done as you can while this lasts. Good luck.

(Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You are a skilled debater any day of the week. However, don't waste energy trying to win an argument with someone today or tomorrow. Better to keep the friendship.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Today and tomorrow are marvelous days to get a lot of mental work done. However, resist arguing with coworkers about matters. You tend to identify with your beliefs right now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is an extremely creative time for you. You're in touch with your muse. Stay with what inspires you. (Romance looks swell as well.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Avoid family arguments. The only reason they will arise is because you are like a dog with a bone about something. Give it up.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You are extremely convincing today! You can sell, market, persuade, convince and teach anyone anything. Watch out, world!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're full of wonderful moneymaking ideas today. Not only that, you can persuade others to agree with you. That's because you believe in what you are saying, and of course, a good idea always sells itself.

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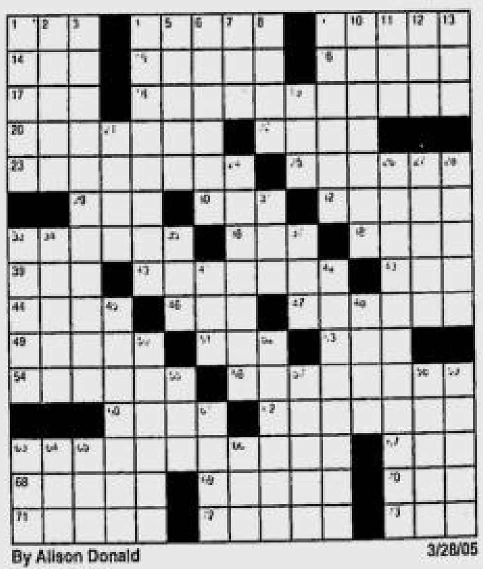
Gradual acceleration in driving can save as much as one kilometer per liter compared to rapid acceleration.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alison Donald
Hartsdale, NY

3/28/05

ACROSS
1 Very softly, in music
4 Those, south of the border
9 Windows predecessor
14 Poetic meadow
15 Ivy league sch. founded by Ben Franklin
16 Bakery workers
17 Neighbor of Russ.
18 Ivory tickler
20 V-shaped cuts
22 Bushwa!
23 Eavesdroppers' posts
25 Granular seasoning
29 Golf score
30 Amtrak, e.g.
32 Tractor maker
33 Nova ___
36 OAS word
38 Vitamin figs.
39 Excessively
40 Spray can
43 Grabbed a bite
44 Mall letters?
46 Chip off the old block
47 Method of voting
49 Borscht need
51 Ask for a handout
53 Touch lightly
54 Write sloppily
56 Household exile
60 Sign gas
62 Consecrates
63 Place for a slice
67 Big success
68 Zagreb resident
69 Spaghetti strainer
70 Barely manage
71 Lock of hair
72 Couldn't stand
73 Fish eggs

DOWN
1 Short, hollow, twanging sound
2 Black tea
3 Wet blanket
4 Feeling of well-being
5 Pitchman's pitch
6 Come-on
7 Raggedy doll
8 Elitist
9 Pulverized
10 Ticket reseller
11 Susan of "L.A. Law"
12 Mined mineral
13 Lith. or Azer., once
19 Baby beagle
21 Chew the fat
24 Keeled over
26 Panting bicyclist?
27 Muse of poetry
28 VCR button
31 Decade divs.
33 Torn tickets
34 Trig. function
35 Two-time loser to D.D.E.
37 Gooey mess
41 Stick up
42 Made suds
45 Poem parts
48 Vietnam neighbor
50 Workout clothes
52 Drinking vessel
55 Chop off
57 Mitt
58 Japanese watch
59 First name in cosmetics
61 "The Face is Familiar" poet
63 %
64 Damaged mdse. tag
65 Ms. Caldwell
66 Narrow inlet

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	N	E	■	R	A	S	P	S	■	S	L	A	M
L	E	A	S	■	P	L	A	I	T	■	P	I	P	E
E	R	I	C	■	S	U	M	E	R	■	A	N	E	W
R	I	V	A	L	■	M	O	R	A	L	■	E	S	S
K	E	E	P	A	D	I	A	R	Y	A	N	D	■	■
■	■	■	E	C	O	N	■	E	S	C	O	R	T	S
B	R	A	D	■	D	U	G	■	■	E	L	I	O	T
R	E	M	■	S	O	M	E	D	A	Y	■	V	E	E
A	D	E	P	T	■	■	M	A	L	■	R	E	D	S
G	O	N	D	O	L	A	■	R	O	T	E	■	■	■
■	■	I	T	W	I	L	L	K	E	E	P	Y	O	U
B	E	T	■	E	L	L	E	R	■	A	L	E	R	T
R	U	I	N	■	T	U	D	O	R	■	E	S	A	I
A	R	E	A	■	E	R	G	O	T	■	T	E	L	L
N	O	S	Y	■	D	E	E	M	S	■	E	S	S	E

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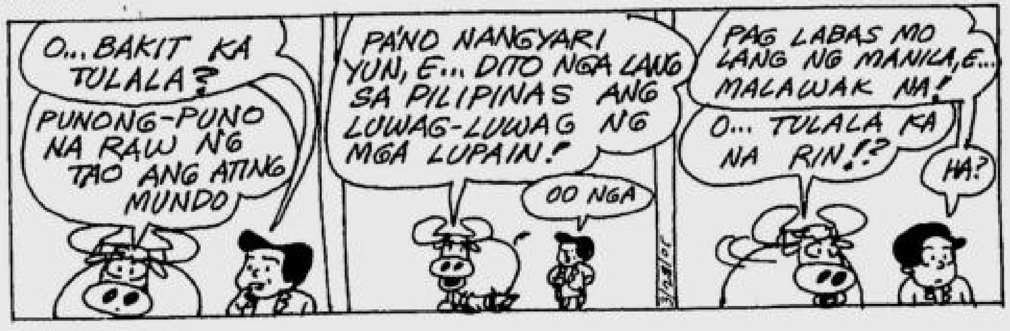
3/25/05

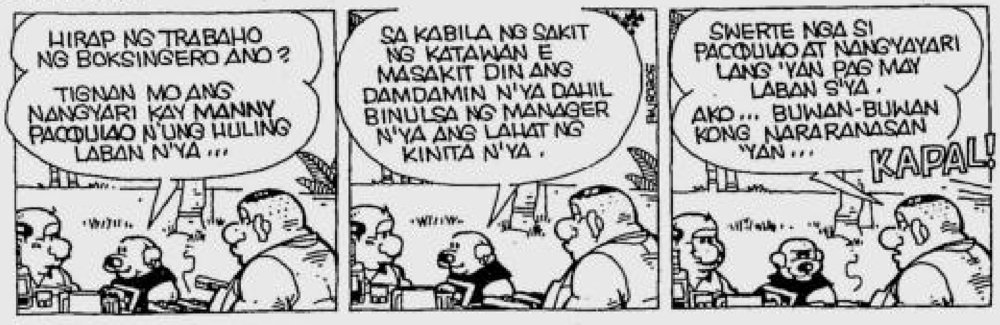
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O... BAKIT KA TULALA?
PUNONG-PUNO NA RAW NG TAO ANG ATING MUNDO
PA'NO NANGYARI YUN, E... DITO NGA LANG SA PILIPINAS ANG LUWAG-LUWAG NG MGA LUPAIN!
OO NGA
PAG LABAS MO LANG NG MANILA, E... MALAWAK NA!
O... TULALA KA NA RIN!?
HA?

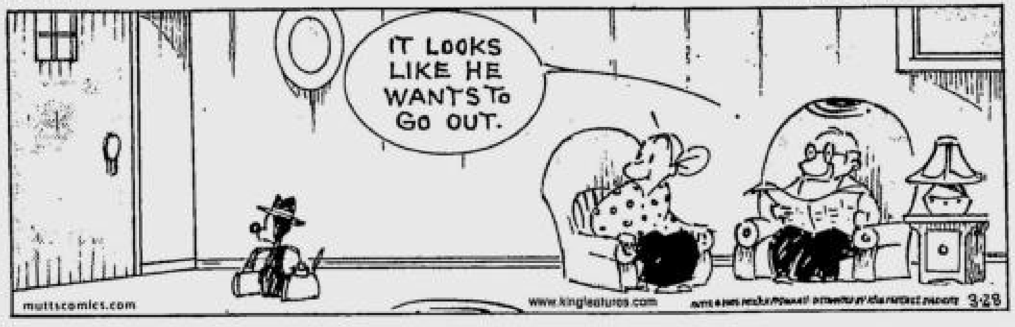
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HIRAP NG TRABAHO NG BOKSINGERO ANO?
TIGNAN MO ANG NANGYARI KAY MANNY PACQUIAO N'UNG HULING LABAN N'YA...
SA KABILA NG SAKIT NG KATAWAN E MASAKIT DIN ANG DAMDAMIN N'YA DAHIL BINULSA NG MANAGER N'YA ANG LAHAT NG KINITA N'YA.
SWERTE NGA SI PACQUIAO AT NANGYAYARI LANG 'YAN PAG MAY LABAN S'YA.
AKO... BUWAN-BUWAN KONG NARARANASAN 'YAN...
KAPAL!

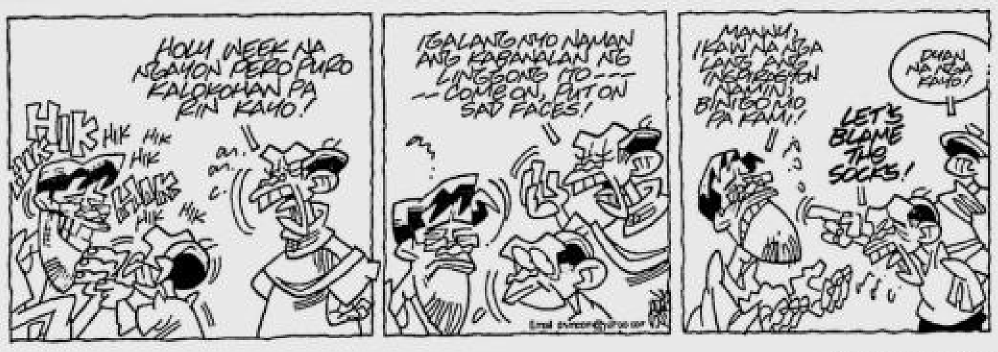
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


IT LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS To Go OUT.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
3-28

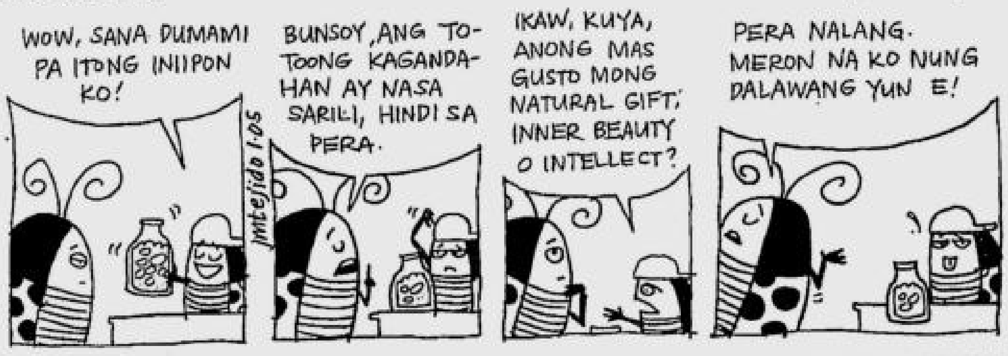
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HOLY WEEK NA NGAYON PERO PURO KALOKOHAN PA RIN KAYO!
HIK HIK HIK HIK HIK HIK
IGALANG N'YO NAMAN ANG KABANALAN NG LINGGONG ITO--- COME ON, PUT ON SAD FACES!
MANNY, IKAW NA NGA LANG ANG INSPIRASYON NAMIN, BINIGO MO PA KAMI!
DYAN NA NGA KAYO!
LET'S BLAME THE SOCKS!

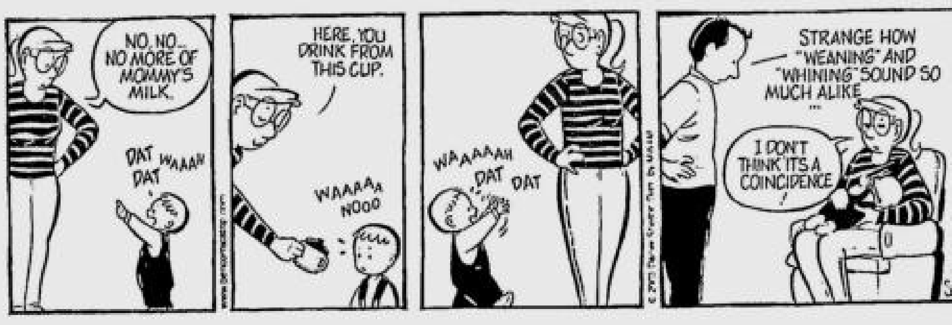
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


WOW, SANA DUMAMI PA ITONG INIIPON KO!
jmtejido 1-05
BUNSOY, ANG TOTOONG KAGANDAHAN AY NASA SARILI, HINDI SA PERA.
IKAW, KUYA, ANONG MAS GUSTO MONG NATURAL GIFT; INNER BEAUTY O INTELLECT?
PERA NALANG. MERON NA KO NUNG DALAWANG YUN E!

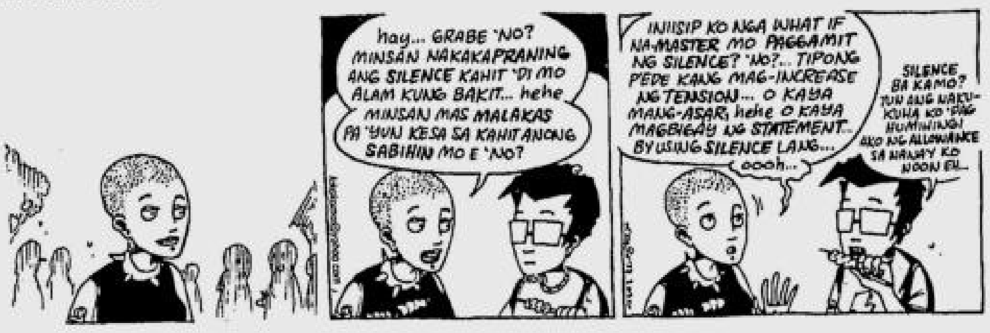
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


NO, NO... NO MORE OF MOMMY'S MILK.
DAT WAAAH DAT
HERE, YOU DRINK FROM THIS CUP.
WAAAAA NOOO
WAAAAAH DAT DAT
STRANGE HOW "WEANING" AND "WHINING" SOUND SO MUCH ALIKE...
I DON'T THINK IT'S A COINCIDENCE!

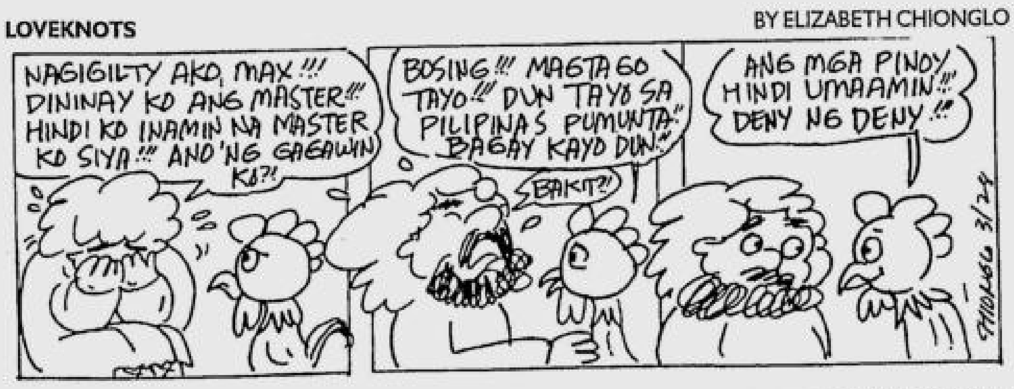
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hay... GRABE 'NO? MINSAN NAKAKAPRANING ANG SILENCE KAHIT 'DI MO ALAM KUNG BAKIT... hehe MINSAN MAS MALAKAS PA 'YUN KESA SA KAHIT ANONG SABIHIN MO E 'NO?
INIISIP KO NGA WHAT IF NA-MASTER MO PAGGAMIT NG SILENCE? 'NO?... TIPONG PEDE KANG MAG-INCREASE NG TENSION... O KAYA MANG-ASAR, hehe O KAYA MAGBIGAY NG STATEMENT... BY USING SILENCE LANG...
oooh...
SILENCE BA KAMO? 'YUN ANG NAKUKUHA KO 'PAG HUMIHINGI AKO NG ALLOWANCE SA NANAY KO NOON EH...

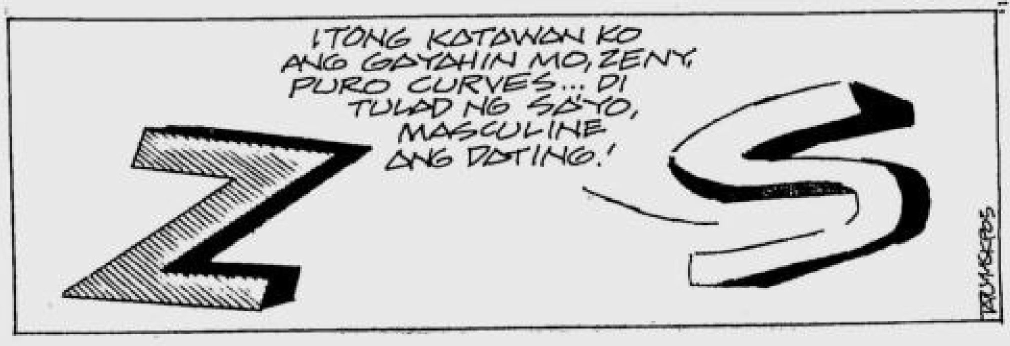
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAGIGILTY AKO, MAX!!! DININAY KO ANG MASTER!!! HINDI KO INAMIN NA MASTER KO SIYA!!! ANO'NG GAGAWIN KO?!
BOSING!!! MAGTAGO TAYO!!! DUN TAYO SA PILIPINAS PUMUNTA! BAGAY KAYO DUN!
BAKIT?!
ANG MGA PINOY HINDI UMAAMIN!!! DENY NG DENY!!
CHIONGLO 3/24

TULDOK

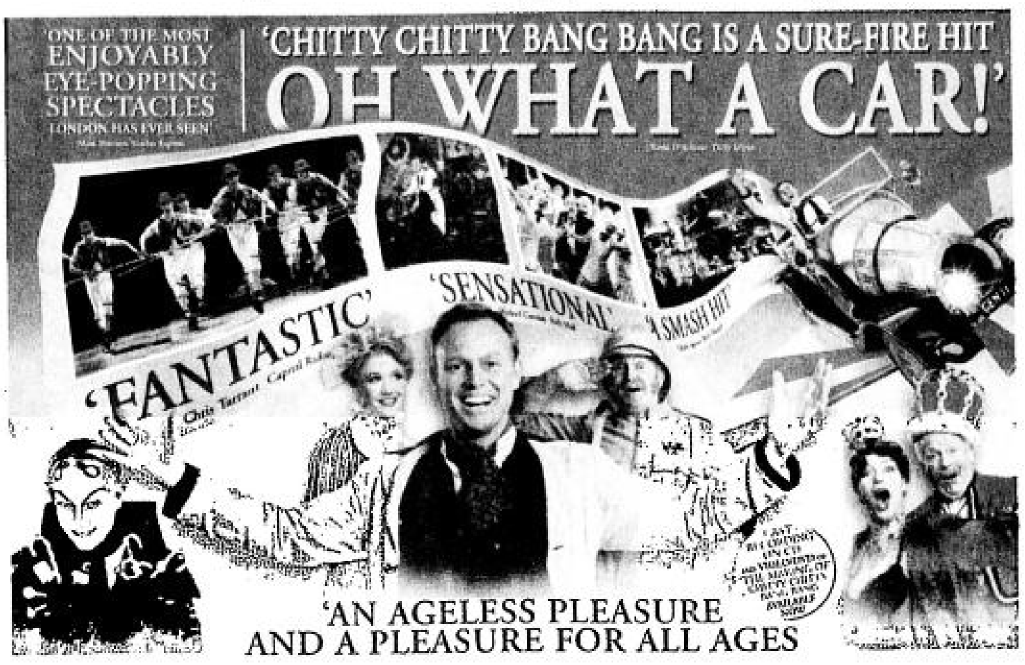
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

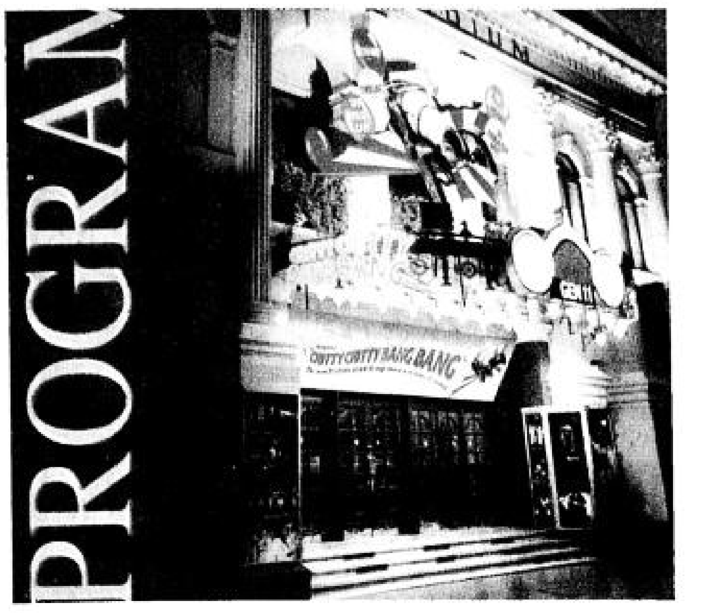

ITONG KATAWAN KO ANG GAYAHIN MO, ZENY, PURO CURVES... DI TULAD NG SAYO, MASCULINE ANG DATING!

'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' is a charmer

From page F1

Chitty Bang Bang" is more than just an ordinary theater production. When it opened on West End in April 2002, it was hailed by an English critic as "the most fantasmagorical stage musical." Rightly so, since the production boasts of stunning special effects, colorful costumes and eye-popping sets and props that include the hydraulic-powered flying car. The effects are sheer theatrical magic. Children squeal at every fascinating sight onstage and adult audiences are awed by the visual spectacle.


'ONE OF THE MOST ENJOYABLY EYE-POPPING SPECTACLES LONDON HAS EVER SEEN'
'CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG IS A SURE-FIRE HIT OH WHAT A CAR!'
'FANTASTIC'
'SENSATIONAL'
'A SMASH HIT'
'AN AGELESS PLEASURE AND A PLEASURE FOR ALL AGES



THE PALLADIUM Theater in London

Enthralling

The simple but enthralling story of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" revolves around single dad and nutty inventor Caractacus Potts, who has two precocious children—Jeremy and Jemima—and is obsessed with resurrecting a worn-out car for the grand prix. A greedy Bulgarian businessman, Baron Bomburst and his wife who abhors kids, are likewise overzealous to get their hands on the car. Desperate to win the car race, they even go to the extent of kidnapping Potts' two children. In the end, of course, good prevails over evil.

Even after two-and-a-half years onstage, "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" remains a popular musical in West End. Tickets sell at a stiff price of as much as 42.50 pounds (around P4,400) on weekends. The Saturday night we watched, which had a sold-out crowd, we were able to book through the Internet a ticket on the stalls (orchestra seats) at 37 pounds (P3,950), excluding the taxes.

Imagine Donovan, a heartthrob in the '90s, dancing with a bamboo cane and flying a car with a mind of its own. He was last seen on the West End stage in his London theater debut as the lead in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

But as the eccentric inventor Caractacus Potts in "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," Donovan does not buckle under the pressure of this newest challenge in his career. His charming performance as the mischievous inventor and doting father appears effortless.

Apparently, Donovan has also been successful in his post-Kylie Minogue career turn. The actor was once romantically involved with his fellow Aussie performer, with whom he even a recorded a chart-topping saccharine duet, "Especially for You." He does eight performances a week for "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," including the matinee shows on weekends.

Unrecognizable

Boyzone member Stephen Gately proves that there's life after joining the popular all-male Irish band. As the scary and hideous-looking Child Catcher, he is hardly recognizable, though. He wears a skull-cap to look bald and appears with prosthetic ears and nose, as well as heavy makeup.

But on the night we watched the show, the minute the Child Catcher sauntered onstage, his mere presence instantly drew loud applause from the audience. They knew it was Gately—and he didn't disappoint a bit.

STEPHEN Gately as the hideous-looking Child Catcher

Gately stepped into the Child Catcher's shoes in September 2004 and has not stopped earning raves for his performance. He is said to be the youngest actor to play the part. Like Donovan, Gately also played the lead in the West End production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," which marked his West End debut.

Even the young stars in the musical who play Caractacus Potts' children, Jemima and Jeremy, delight the audience with their flair for singing and dancing. And Scarlett Strallen as Truly Scrumptious is witty and amusing. "Madly and Deeply are my sisters," she says in her dialogue. "Seriously?," ask the kids. "That's my brother," she replies.

Stocky actor Christopher Biggins, who plays Baron Bomburst, and Louise Gold as his wife, Baroness Bomburst, pack the comic punches within the musical. Amazingly, they complement each other and theirs is certainly a tough act to beat.

For more than two hours, the audience gets transported to a mystical and musical world in "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," with pirates, castles, clever gadgets, mechanical contraptions, madcap fun and non-stop adventure for all ages.

When the magical car flies for the first time within the show, audiences are momentarily stunned by the breathtaking effects. And I thought the shiny Cadillac or the flying helicopter in "Miss Saigon" were already awesome! Chitty, the car, is a star in itself, getting loud applause from the audience.

After it ends its run at West End, "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" will open on Broadway at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts in Spring 2005. Previews begin on March 29, with the opening night set for April 28.

REP regulars Robbie Guevarra and Niccolo Manahan in a scene from "Little Shop of Horrors"

Rep workshops in Alabang, Eastwood, Makati

REPERTORY Philippines is holding summer acting workshops in Alabang, Eastwood, and in Makati City.

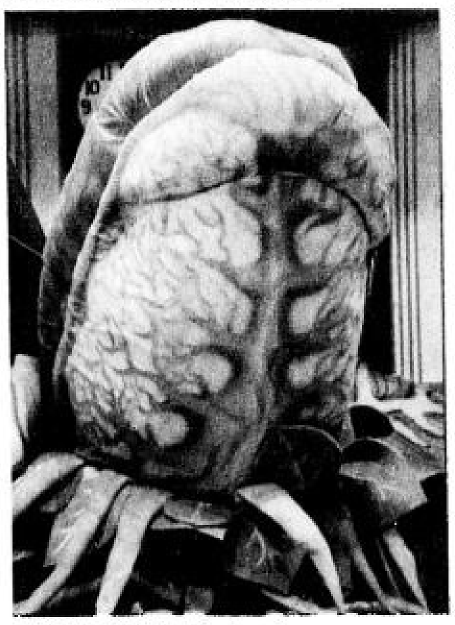
The Rep workshop in Makati will be held at Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension, starting April 4 until the last two weeks of May. Classes for children (5-8 years old), pre-teens (9-12 years old), teens (13-16 years old) and adult (17 years old and up) are available on a first-come first-served basis.

Registration fee is P6,000. Graduation showcase recital will be held at the Onstage Theater, Greenbelt 1. Call 8870710.

The Rep workshop in Alabang will be held at the Palms Country Club. Classes for the teens class (13-17 years old) will be from April 4-29 while classes for the children's class (5-12 years old) will run from May 2-27. Registration fee for club members is P4,200, and P4,600 for non-club members.

Non-club members must secure an endorsement from a bona fide club member if they wish to enroll. Graduation showcase recital will be held at the ballroom of the Palms Country Club. Call 7717171 local 308.

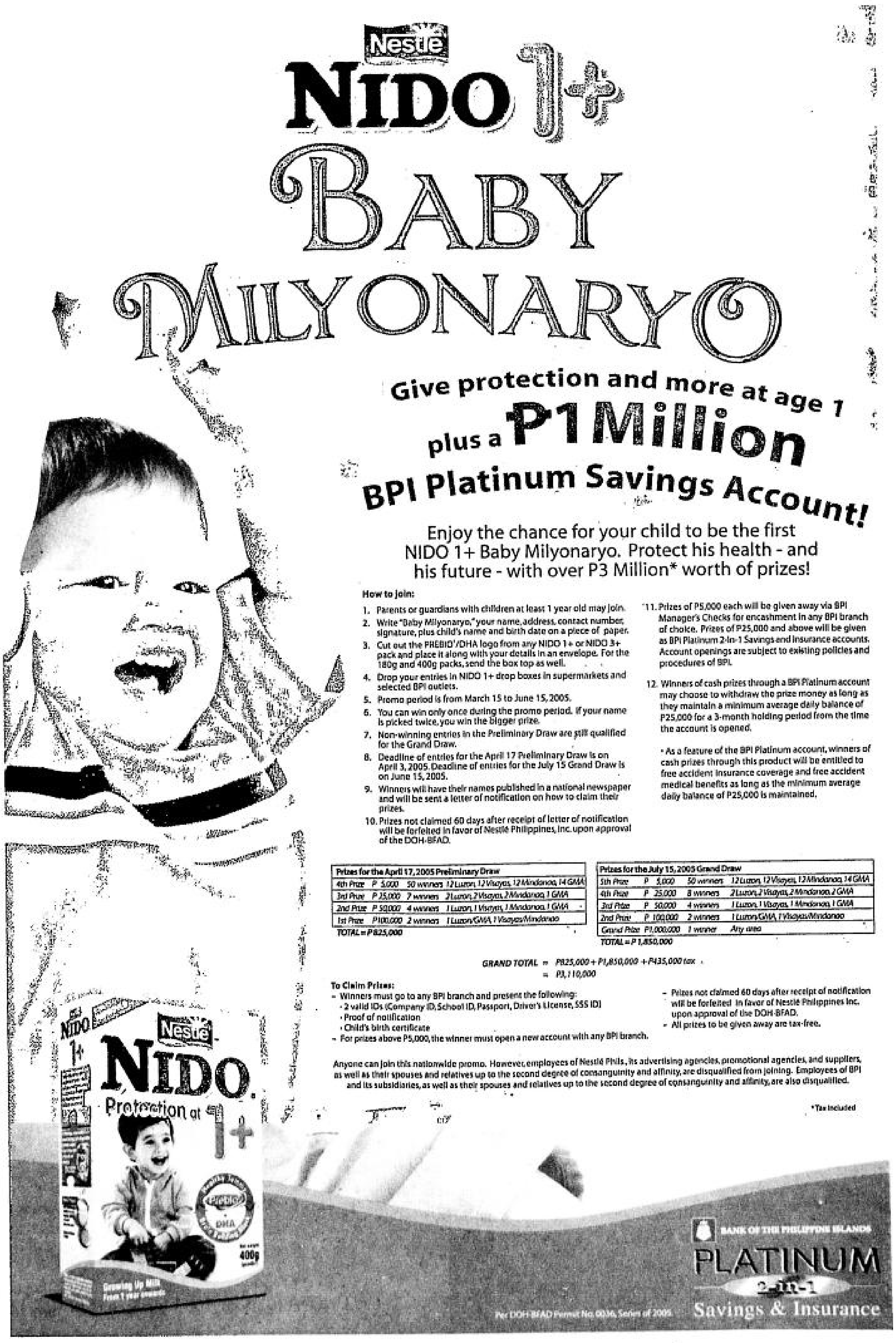
The Rep workshop in Eastwood will be held at 2/L of the Shanghai Bistro. Classes will be from April 18-May 30. Registration fee is P6,000. Graduation showcase recital will be held at the Central Plaza of Eastwood. Registration is currently going on at the Eastwood Office, 3/L, Cybermall. Call 6876770 to 74.



THE INCREDIBLE Audrey 2

"Little Shop of Horrors" cast members Niccolo Manahan, Robbie Guevara, Amparo Sietereales, Myrene Hernandez, Arnel Carrion, and Meynard Peñalosa will act as teachers in these workshops. Many of them have been teaching Rep workshop classes for many years now and are favorite instructors of workshop students.

Call 8870710, fax 8880887 or e-mail rep@broline.com.



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4. Drop your entries in NIDO 1+ drop boxes in supermarkets and selected BPI outlets.
5. Promo period is from March 15 to June 15, 2005.
6. You can win only once during the promo period. If your name is picked twice, you win the bigger prize.
7. Non-winning entries in the Preliminary Draw are still qualified for the Grand Draw.
8. Deadline of entries for the April 17 Preliminary Draw is on April 3, 2005. Deadline of entries for the July 15 Grand Draw is on June 15, 2005.
9. Winners will have their names published in a national newspaper and will be sent a letter of notification on how to claim their prizes.
10. Prizes not claimed 60 days after receipt of letter of notification will be forfeited in favor of Nestlé Philippines, Inc. upon approval of the DOH-BFAD.
11. Prizes of P5,000 each will be given away via BPI Manager's Checks for encashment in any BPI branch of choice. Prizes of P25,000 and above will be given as BPI Platinum 2-in-1 Savings and Insurance accounts. Account openings are subject to existing policies and procedures of BPI.
12. Winners of cash prizes through a BPI Platinum account may choose to withdraw the prize money as long as they maintain a minimum average daily balance of P25,000 for a 3-month holding period from the time the account is opened.

- As a feature of the BPI Platinum account, winners of cash prizes through this product will be entitled to free accident insurance coverage and free accident medical benefits as long as the minimum average daily balance of P25,000 is maintained.

Prizes for the April 17, 2005 Preliminary Draw

4th Prize	P 5,000	50 winners	12 Luzon, 12 Visayas, 12 Mindanao, 14 GMA
3rd Prize	P 25,000	7 winners	2 Luzon, 2 Visayas, 2 Mindanao, 1 GMA
2nd Prize	P 50,000	4 winners	1 Luzon, 1 Visayas, 1 Mindanao, 1 GMA
1st Prize	P100,000	2 winners	1 Luzon/GMA, 1 Visayas/Mindanao

TOTAL = P825,000

Prizes for the July 15, 2005 Grand Draw

5th Prize	P 5,000	50 winners	12 Luzon, 12 Visayas, 12 Mindanao, 14 GMA
4th Prize	P 25,000	8 winners	2 Luzon, 2 Visayas, 2 Mindanao, 2 GMA
3rd Prize	P 50,000	4 winners	1 Luzon, 1 Visayas, 1 Mindanao, 1 GMA
2nd Prize	P 100,000	2 winners	1 Luzon/GMA, 1 Visayas/Mindanao
Grand Prize	P1,000,000	1 winner	Any area

TOTAL = P 1,850,000

GRAND TOTAL = P825,000 + P1,850,000 + P435,000 tax
= P3,110,000

To Claim Prizes:
- Winners must go to any BPI branch and present the following:
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  - Proof of notification
  - Child's birth certificate
- For prizes above P5,000, the winner must open a new account with any BPI branch.
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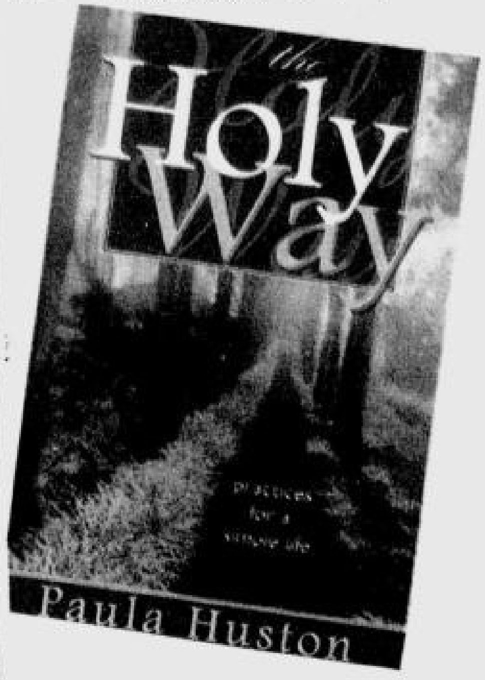

Book outlines way to simple living

PAULA Huston, a wife and a mother of four, a college professor and a writer, talks about simplicity in her book, "The Holy Way."

Huston recounts her quest for simplicity, her many pratfalls and self-deceptions, and the few but true insights she discovers.

"The Holy Way" reveals a life not unlike our own, filled with noise and clutter, but also sparked by the desire to make everything more simple.

Inspired by the example of a monastic community and the stories of the monastic fathers, Huston outlines several steps to experience simplicity.

"The Holy Way" is published in the Philippines by Jesuit Communications and available at Tanging Yaman kiosks at the Sonolux Bldg. and Loyola House of Studies of the Ateneo de Manila University; SM Megamall; SM North Edsa; at the 2/L of the Gateway Mall in Quezon City; and leading bookstores nationwide. Call 4265971 to 72.

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Orphaned by the non-reading Filipino race, book authors are adopted by FEU students

DEAN Jaime An Lim, himself a well-regarded author, talks about the joys of literature before students.

Adopt-a-Writer project fosters love of Philippine literature

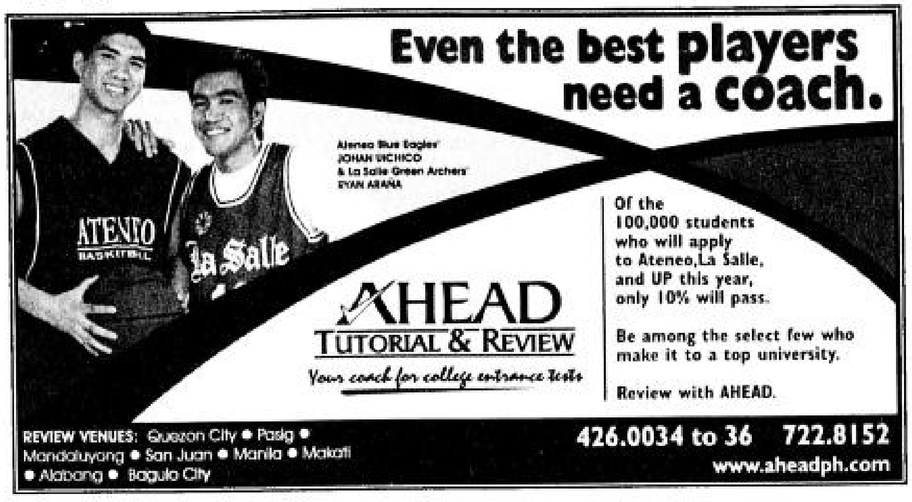
By Marie Aubrey J. Villaceran
Contributor

FILIPINOS need to read more. Despite the increase of the literacy rate in our country from 72 to 90 percent in the last 30 years, Filipinos are still experiencing a steady decline in terms of understanding and appreciation of Philippine history and culture.

A National Book Development Board survey reveals that, in a year, the average Filipino spends P200 on books and reads an average of 12 pages.

How many Filipinos would rather spend money on a good book than buy a prepaid card for their cellphones? How many students on the MRT actually carry around literary ti-

ADOPT-A-WRITER/ G2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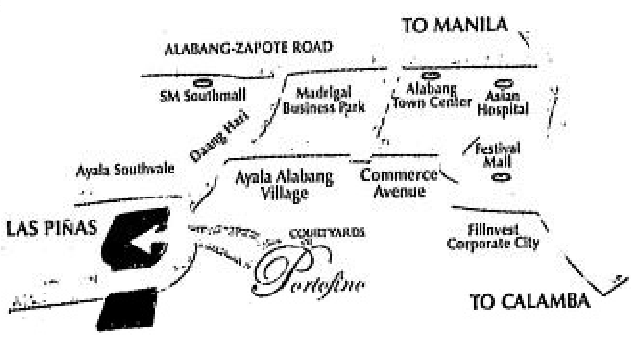

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NCCA announces Mindanao, Visayas winners of text poetry contest

THE NATIONAL Committee on the Literary Arts of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts has released the list of winners of its TextPinoy Tula riddle-writing contests in Mindanao and the Visayas.

There are two winners in Mindanao: Dexter Murillo of Davao City and Raul Moldez of Cagayan de Oro City. Jun Magpusao of Davao City is special prize winner.

Meanwhile, the winner in the Visayas is Betsy Ferolino of Negros Oriental.

The winning poems:

Kung mugawas iyang sirad-an, kung muabot iyang ablihan (purtahan)

If he goes out, he closes it; when he arrives he opens it. (door)

—Dexter Murillo

Kon giinitan ka, lisoa sya
kay bugnawng hangin iyang ibuga. (aircon)

If you feel warm, turn it, and cool air it blows. (aircon)

—Raul G. Moldez

Gigutom si Filex gegesi ang karsones gipaak ang batiis? (suman)

Felix is hungry; tears his pants, bites the forelegs. (rice roll)

—Jun Magpusao

Mga mata maoy gipislat, ang agtang maoy nilurat (cell phone)

The eyes are the ones crushed, it's the forehead that lights up. (cell phone)

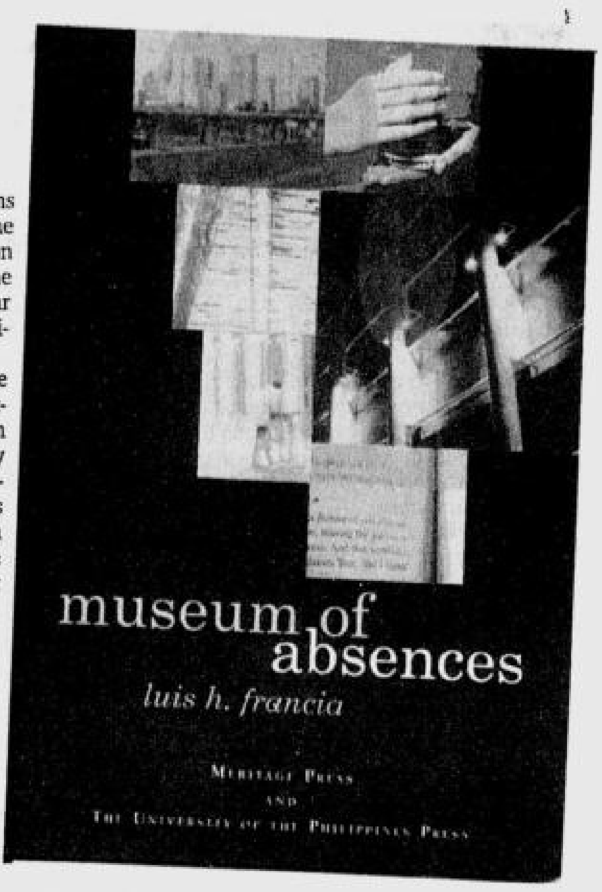
—Betsy Ferolino

Meanwhile, winners from Luzon were honored last March 18 by the Filipinas Institute of Translation and UP Institute of Creative Writing: Rene Ayala, Ferdinand Bajado, Fernando Gonzales, Arnulfo Sambajon, Roger Endaya, Joel Costa Malabanan, Rudy Fernandez, April Jade Imson, Raymund Pambid, Noli Cruz, Limuel Abrogena, Greg Rodillo, Rowell Madula, Noel Fortun, Julie Ann Love Roja, Jess Ferrer, Edward Quintas, Franz Barcelona, Loi Landicho, Mark Lester Rivera, Jamin Domingo, Rolando Yape, Enrico Torralba, Pedro Funilas III, Fr. Arnel Vitor, Remigio Alvarez Alva, and Armando Centeno. Aside from cash prizes, they received copies of the collection of winning entries with illustrations by Manuel Baldemor.

Textula Pinoy was the banner program of the NCCA National Committee on Literary Arts during last February's Arts Month 2005. A contest that employed SMS technology in mobile phones, it was organized with Globe Telecom.

Powerful poetics of loss

By Ralph Semino Galán
Contributor



LUIS H. Francia's third poetry collection titled "Museum of Absences" (Quezon City: UP Press and California: Meritage Press, 2004, 72 pages) is a virtual gallery of the dearth of sympathy and empathy of the entire human race to one another on the war-scarred face of this Earth.

The 38 poems attest to the brutality and barbarity people in power are capable of inflicting on their inferiors, perceived or otherwise.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part, "Dis/Appearances," is devoted to the articulation of the sentiments of expatriate Filipinos in America and their state of exclusion, effacement and eviction.

Eloquent

A series of five poems collectively called "The Manong Chronicles" expresses most eloquently the resentments of a Filipino old-timer to his adopted/adapted land and his yearning for the imaginary motherland:

"Where now is that boy's innocence/ My exile's faith, nuclear/ Large but in shards of beauty/ In shapes of an apocalypse?/ Where in a white world can/ This grain of unhusked rice spin?//" ("I. A Manong Meditates"), "Padre, I demand my god to be dark,/ Squat, thick-lipped, bright with/ Garlicky speech and/ Full-pledged erection,/ ("III. A Manong Complains, as the Star-Spangled Banner is Played").

Other interesting pieces included in this Filipino-American portion are "Catholic Anonymous," "A Snail's Progress," and "Cinderella at Fifty."

The first poem deals with racial discrimination inside the church, in what is supposed to be the most sacred and liberative of spaces:

"Don't even/ look, don't even/ move your head half an inch/ I remembered the group's advice/ to stare straight ahead//."

The second and more subversive composition tackles the rat race, which is emblematic of the North American ethos. The passive-aggressive persona pretends to be docile during the daytime, but becomes hostile after dark:

"Who are Wildmen and/ Conspirators at night/ Martyrs by light//."

"Cinderella at Fifty," on the other hand, is a continuation and/or deconstruction of the famous European fairy tale. In his version, Francia dismisses the traditional happy ending in the third stanza, by making the blonde bombshell suffer the infidelities of an alcoholic husband with a predilection for Asian beauties:

"How were you to know about his drinking,/ his fondness for Third World girls?/."

In his seminal essay titled "Filipinos in the United States and their Literature of Exile," Oscar V. Campomanes, foremost Filipino scholar on Asian-American Studies, observed that "(m)otifs of departure, nostalgia, incompletion, rootlessness, leavetaking, and dispossession recur with force in most writings produced by Filipinos in the United States and Filipino-Americans, with the Philippines as always either the original or terminal reference point."

Read in this light, "Dis/Appearances is a valuable contribution to the growing corpus of writing about the diasporic and exilic experiences of migrant Filipinos.

Personal reaction

The second section, "Zero Ground," expounds on Francia's poetic persona's personal reaction to the Sept. 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center's twin towers and the other atrocities committed by people against one another, ironically in the name of love or the god they adhere to.

"Agatona of Aringay, Henry of Philadelphia" retells the love affair of the persona's grandparents: "Sent north to the Ilokos/ To shoot the damn insurrectos/ What Lolo found instead was Lola./ Battle enough.//"

But their wedlock is also replete with socio-political implications, for it is a microcosmic replication of Filipino-American relations: "Henry of Philadelphia/ Devoured her country as/ Hungrily as she devoured him./"

The 9/11 tragedy is transcended by Francia's poetics of loss, which is also a poetics of recovery, if not redemption: "All have gone but are not lost./ In each of their deaths we live./ In every one of our lives, they are born." ("September 11, 2001"), "How beautiful the two of you are/ Even at that moment of horror, in/ That instinctive assertion of your humanity./" ("On Reading the Times Memorials for the 9/11 Victims") "Our bones are marrow'd with hope/ Our childhood gods and duendes in tow// Cradles and graves on our backs.//" ["New York Mythologies"].

Reflections

The last part, "Meditations," is a sequence of reflections on writing, on the word made flesh, on love and loss, on the inevitability of war and the remote possibilities of peace.

The first of these cogitations is a poetics of sorts in which the persona begins by being slightly amusing and culminates with him musing on the apocalypse of the word, the world: "It starts with an itch, you see, so you scratch. Psoriasis? No. Metamorphosis.//... In the end is the flesh running after word./ In the end is the sword running after flesh./ In the end... I hope it will never."

Whether in the form of death, departure or divorce, loss is a difficult psychological phenomenon to handle. The gaping abyss one has to confront requires a leap of faith, for every kind of flesh-gnawing and spirit-devouring monster flourishes in its mazelike depths.

But in his life-affirming book "Care for the Soul," Thomas Moore reminds us that the man-eating minotaur of the labyrinth is named after the Greek word for star—Asterion.

He concludes the preliminary chapter by stating that "(w)e have to care for this suffering with extreme reverence so that, in our fear and anger at the beast, we do not overlook the star."

It is during the darkest moments of our lives when there is the most possibility for light and enlightenment, for out of the chaos of uncertainty, the livid truth of lived experience emerges, the balancing of opposites, the yin and yang of oriental philosophy.

Francia's poetics of dispossession and desolation, therefore, is actually no other than a poetics of convalescence and comfort incognito.

Adopt-a-Writer project fosters love . . .

From page G1

ties instead of textbooks? Why is it that non-textbook publishing houses in the Philippines continue to experience dismal sales? How many of us can rattle off names of Filipino fictionists, poets and essayists off the top of our heads? The puny number you will come up with is more than demoralizing.

In an aggressive move to generate reading interest in the average Filipino, the Far Eastern University (FEU) recently tapped the University of the Philippines Press to mount an "Adopt-a-Writer" campaign for the current semester.

FEU has agreed to recommend selected UP Press titles as supplementary readings for all Literature 1 courses. In turn, the UP Press will arrange for authors to visit the classes which have been "adopted" and dialogue with the students and teachers for about an hour-and-a-half. They discuss their books as well as general issues concerning literature and creative writing.

Jaime An Lim, FEU dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, envisioned the project because of his desire to give students a "sense of the 'realness' of Philippine literature... Literature as something that is alive."

An award-winning writer himself, he wants to communicate this passion for the written word to the students in the university.

Said An Lim, "Some courses in FEU require only one literature course so students have just one chance to come to an appreciation of literature. We should use that opportunity to nurture a genuine love for literature in these students so they will read on even if it's not required."

UP Press director Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, another multi-awarded writer and critic, was enthusiastic about the idea.

Young writers

One thing that An Lim made sure of was that the roster of authors to be adopted by the different Literature 1 classes in FEU should consist mainly of writers who "are beginning to make a name for themselves and need a little bit more exposure so that we can also promote literary works not usually in the limelight." These writers include Cyan Abad-Jugo, Rebecca Añonuevo, Luna Sicat-Cleto, Carlomar Arcangel Daoana, Honorio Bartolome De Dios, Maria L.M. Fres-Felix, Ma. Romina Gonzalez, Vicente Garcia Groyon, Luis Katigbak and Angelo Lacuesta.

Inviting young writers can also make it easier to build rapport between the adopted writer and the student and maybe even "give them (students) the necessary push to write themselves."

The project also adopted more well-known writers such as Efren Abueg, Erwin Castillo, Rosario Cruz Lucero, J. Neil Garcia, Jaime An Lim and Susan Lara.

FEU recently completed the "Adopt-a-Writer" project for the second semester and both students and teachers were very pleased with the results.

NOVELIST Vicente Groyon mesmerizes his readers.

Thrilled gasps, normally reserved for celebrity sightings, escaped students' lips whenever the writers walked in. Students eagerly asked questions about the germ of their favorite story or poem, writers' inspirations and motivations. One or two nursing majors sought advice for young aspiring writers.

For those with no such "literary" ambitions, Lucero told students that literature still has a place in daily life. She narrated the story of her old friend who was a literature major here in the Philippines but had to leave to become a nurse in the United States. Her friend became financially successful in the land of milk and honey, a common dream for most Filipino nurses, and she admitted that her background in literature helped. Her nursing education may have taught her all about physical pain but "reading helped her understand the psychological pain, the suffering that also afflict the sick and the dying, so that patients as well as doctors sought her assistance most of the time. So she kept getting promoted."

Students found the encounters exciting. At the end of each session, not a few students whipped out their camera phones and asked to be photographed beside their favorite writers. It was an altogether new experience for the Filipino writers as well. "I feel like a rock star!" Katigbak grinned as he posed with the students.

"We hope other schools to come up with a similar project," An Lim said. "I am challenging other schools to create and implement their own programs so that we can promote the love of literature to all Filipinos."

Those interested may call the UP Press at 9266642 or e-mail uppress@uppress.org.

LUIS Joaquin Katigbak is flanked by young fans.

Sitting at the master's feet

From page G4

countless readings in the classes she taught afterward before Ma'm Edith finally understood what he meant. But while this was definitely a eureka moment, it isn't what tops her greatest moments collection.

"When he [Frost] didn't explain the rest of the poem to me, that was the best compliment I ever got as a writer," she said. "Because he knew I understood."

At this point, most of us were scribbling away in our little notebooks. I tried as much as possible to resist the urge to take down notes because I wanted to listen and enjoy a story as a child would, with Ma'm Edith as my Lola Basyang at the moment.

But the wonderful epigrams kept pouring out of her that I finally gave in and wrote down one. "When you're a writer, you are always a writer; not just when you're holding a pen but when you're eating, walking..." Reading this now, I realize that of all the gems Ma'm Edith shared with us that afternoon, I wrote down one of the most basic truths that each of us in that group tried to make a living out off everyday.

I don't remember anymore when exactly we started to feel comfortable or who asked the first question and what it was. Somehow we got there. We asked her the usual safe questions and she answered each one of them enthusiastically. Then there was one guy asked her about her age to which she replied: "Don't ever ask an old woman her age. You should wait for her to tell you."

I managed to ask her three and of course, I have to share them. First I asked her if she remembered all her students. For surely, her classes shared more intimacy even if they only lasted for three weeks. "I remember the really good ones and the really bad ones," she said. "If I don't remember some, they must be in the middle."

Next, I asked her if she ever had traumatized students. Here Ma'm Edith admitted that when it comes to criticism, she was always kind. "My husband said I'm too nice. He was adverse. But what if that student could become a super genius writer after all," she recalled.

She gave me a little compliment with my last question. "You always ask the good questions!" she said. Yes, she is really that nice. I asked her if she used a computer. She said no, not even the typewriter. The sound the keys make distracted her immensely as she worked.

Ah the romantic pen. Still the favorite of the masters.

STUDENTS, seminarians and parish workers evaluate Catholic publications.

UST Journalism juniors report survey of Catholic media.

UST CATHOLIC PRESS SEMINAR

Delivering the faith right at your doorstep

By Reagan D. Tan
Contributor

WHICH would Juan de la Cruz prefer to read: a tabloid with pictures of scantily clad women or a newsletter about his parish?

Despite living in Asia's only Catholic country (aside from East Timor), parish workers in the Philippines often complain about the lack of evangelization in the grass roots—pointing to the lack of information dissemination in local parishes.

Clarisse Gonzales, a parish worker in Quezon City, said their newsletter is more like an announcement bulletin than an evangelical medium. Other pastoral workers are also dismayed by the overkill censorship by parish priests.

These are just some of the problems that prompted professors and students of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) to reinforce the evangelical arm of the Church through its regular seminars on Catholic journalism.

Through the years, Catholic journalism, described by one professor as the "invisible media of the Philippines," has remained an overlooked and untapped force of evangelization. And it was because of this that in 2002, the Journalism and the Journalism Society of the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters started to hold the annual Catholic Journalism Seminar.

VETERAN journalist Nestor Cuartero gives tips on improving the look and content of Catholic publications.

"UST has produced some of the best Catholic writers and editors," Jeremiah Opiniano, a faculty member, said. "It has ample leverage to make Catholic journalism an academic field, and make the seminars a way of professionalizing this kind of journalism in the different tiers of the Church."

For this year, the journalism teachers and students held the seminars outside of UST to better bring the advocacy closer to the Catholic heartland—to the parishes themselves. The seminars were held at the Sto. Domingo Church in the Diocese of Cubao, and the Cathedral of Good Shepherd in the Diocese of Novaliches.

Seminar speakers, most of whom were UST journalism teachers, included Nestor Cuartero of Tempo, Jesselyn Garcia de la Cruz of the CBCP Monitor, Felipe Salvoza and Bernadette Sto. Domingo of BusinessWorld, Lito Zulueta of the INQUIRER, and Opiniano of the Consortium on Migration Journalism.

Although the speakers emphasized

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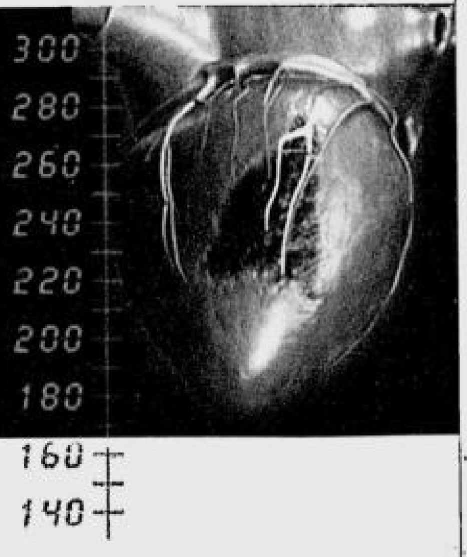

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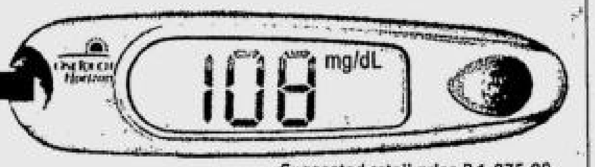

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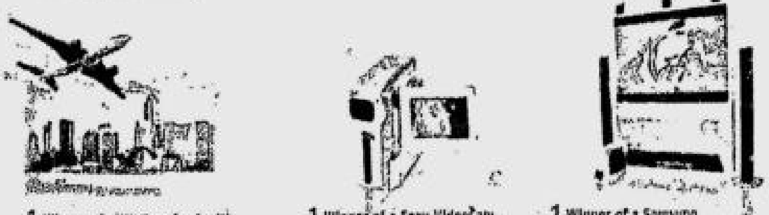

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Sitting at the master's feet

By Janus Victoria
Contributor

THE FIRST thing we did upon seeing Edith Tiempo was take pictures of her. We were a group of journalists on a tour of Dumaguete city last December and a picnic with the renowned poetess in her alma mater of Silliman University was part of our itinerary. She acted so graciously about it, I started feeling guilty. She is a national artist for God's sake and we were snapping at her as if she was a tourist spot!

"What would you like to know?" Ma'm Edith (as I imagine what I would call her) asked us.

On my part, I didn't know what I could ask. I already knew the book-jacket information about her. She took her undergraduate studies in English there and got her Master's degree in Creative Writing from the University of Iowa. Afterwards, she and her husband, the late fictionist Edilberto Tiempo, founded the National Writer's Workshop at Silliman, the first creative writing workshop in the country, in 1962. Forty years later, and without fail, it remains to be the most prestigious honing ground for aspiring writers and the prime model for all the other writing workshops in major universities.

She updated us with the latest developments in the workshop. It's going to be bigger this year. Students from the University of Iowa, headed by her daughter, Rowena, who teaches there now, will be joining them.

Then she told us about her days when she herself was a student. During her stay at the University of Iowa, one of the visiting writers she had the privilege to hear was Robert Frost. After the lecture, she was invited to join a number of selected students to spend an after-dinner gathering with Frost. "We were really sitting at the Master's feet then," she recalled. And unlike us at this time, she had asked a question.

Frost encounter

She asked him what the last two lines of his poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." meant. "Easy does it," he answered.

His answer sounded so simple but it would take nine years and

SITTING/ G2

NATIONAL Artist Edith Tiempo and her admirers

Hit the Colors

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CHEERS TO SUMMER FROM SAISAKI

Geisha

Intriguing, graceful, and elegant, the Geisha are traditional Japanese entertainers, skilled in a wide range of art forms, wise in the complex traditions of serving clients, and in various games and the art of conversation. The delicate rituals mastered by the Geisha have been refined over centuries. In tribute to these genteel ladies and their captivating talents, Saisaki blends the subtle flavors of Japanese wine with the refreshing spirits of blue curacao, triple sec and margarita mix. This sophisticated concoction evokes the Geisha's deep feminine strength, and Japan's richly textured culture.

Yakuza

Mysterious, powerful, and sly, the Yakuza is the lord of the Japanese underworld. They came from the Samurai without a Shogun, or warriors without masters. In the initiation ceremony of the Yakuza, they exchange *sake* cups to symbolize the entrance into their secretive world. The amounts of *sake* poured into each cup depended upon one's status, whether the participants were father-son, brother-brother, elder-younger, etc. The ceremony was usually performed in front of a Shinto altar, giving it religious significance. At Saisaki, even the Yakuza would be honored to drink this beverage that bears their name. A potent merging of Japanese wine and blue curacao, with the robust tang of lemon, pineapple, and melon juices, this drink is meant to make one feel the exciting danger of entering the Yakuza's inner circle.

Delivering the faith

From page G3

the need to professionalize the Catholic media, they urged Catholic writers not to forget the religious basis of Catholic journalism. Ultimately, Catholic press practice involves devotion to the truth, they said. They cited the example of Eugenia Apostol, founder of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and herself a UST Journalism graduate, who once said, "It's not easy being a journalist. You can still back out if you are not ready to be a martyr for the sake of truth and justice."

According to Opiniano, Catholic Journalism can mobilize popular support for the activities of local parishes, increase community awareness about relevant issues, and serve as a tool for evangelization—all of which are "sacred vocations" in the Church's social responsibilities.

"In its first three years, the UST Catholic Journalism Seminar gathered pastoral workers, students, and professionals doing Catholic journalism work, but it is now reaching out to the parishes where this 'invisible medium' thrives," Opiniano said. "The University shares its expertise to the main actors of the Catholic media as a form of community service and affirmative action."

JESSELYN Garcia de la Cruz of the CBCP Monitor

BERNADETTE Sto. Domingo of BusinessWorld

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TRUST OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Trust industry strengthens foundations as it welcomes impressive growth

By Joel V. Nigos

DURING the last several years, the trust industry has seen very impressive growth. It was that impressive that it has grown faster than the deposit products being offered by banks. Though most of the growth is in common trust funds (CTFs) and those which are sold to individuals, there is concern that investors might not distinguish very well between the trust and the bank products that are made available to them. There is also concern that the public should have full understanding of the trust products available in the market and the benefits in investing in these trust products. New regulations being implemented which affect the trust industry should also be communicated to the clients as well.

TRUST INDUSTRY/H2

> TOAP wants to make sure that trust products are fully understood by the clients, that options are all clearly laid out to them so they are able to make the better choice

Ride on tiger economies with MetroDollar Asian Bond Fund

ANALYSTS forecast that Asia will continue to enjoy a buoyant economy in 2005 as an offshoot of a positive growth rate posted last year. This development was attributed to capital inflows, favorable monetary conditions and upbeat domestic demand backed by brisk investment activity. East Asia and Southeast Asia, in particular, were identified as focal points of economic momentum.

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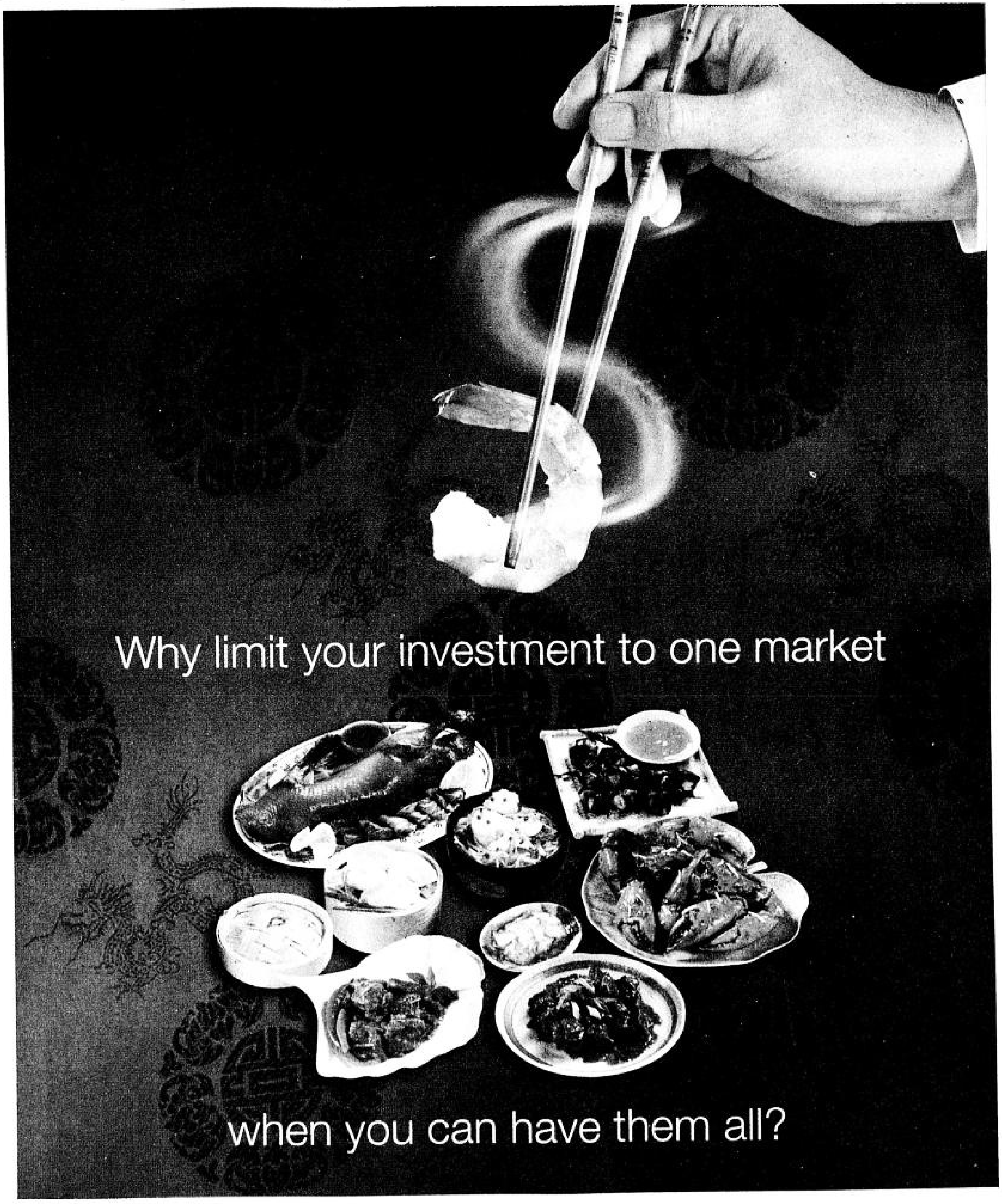
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The board of directors for 2004-2005, shown from left, are: Serafin P. Tongco, SVP/trust officer, Banco Filipino, director; Rafael G. Ayuste Jr, FVP Metrobank, director; Ma, Elena S. Sarmiento, FSVP/trust officer PNB, director; Ador A. Abrogena, EVP/trust officer Banco de Oro, president; Ma. Teresa R. Toledo, VP/trust officer HSBC, vice president; lawyer Federico P. Tangcongco, VP/trust legal counsel RCBC, corporate secretary; lawyer Susan M. Manalo, AVP BPI, director; Raul C. Diaz, FVP/trust officer, PBCom, director; Marvin V. Fausto, SVP/trust officer, Equitable/PCI, treasurer.

Trust industry strengthens foundations . . .

From page H1

As the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP) marks its 41st anniversary this year, the organization which is composed of representatives from banks and investment houses and other entities which has trust license and trust operations, is holding its annual Trust Consciousness Week. Held usually in March since 1993, it has for this year adopted the theme "Strengthening Foundations for Growth." Simply put, trust practitioners want to build up the industry's foundations before it grows further. This could also mean going back to the basics.

Explains Ador Abrogena, TOAP president and senior vice president for trust banking group of Banco de Oro, "The TOAP has always been at the forefront of pursuing measures that will help benefit the trust industry and the clients as well. And the Trust Consciousness Week is a significant avenue for us to educate the public everything about trust. It also enables us trust practitioners, to be best acquainted with the issues facing the industry and the measures to be taken to address these."

Foremost of the things TOAP wants to strengthen is making sure that trust products are fully understood by the clients, that options are all clearly laid out to them so they are able to make the better choice.

"We do have the usual disclosures that trust products are not bank liabilities or deposits. When one invests in trust funds, clients are not given a guaranteed rate. The responsibility of the trustee or investment manager is to get the best deal for the client according to his objectives and instructions. The risk is for the account of the client. The value that the trustee or investment manager provides is his understanding of the market that allows him to select the investments that are suited to his client's objectives, his access to information and the economies of dealing large blocks of funds that translates into higher rates and better liquidity for his client's funds," he clarifies.

Abrogena says that through disclosures they are able to tell investors the risks of their investments. "What we really want to communicate here is trust is separate from the bank. We want to get investors and not depositors." This way, he adds, they are able to protect the clients and the banks as well.

Other ways in which the trust industry would be strengthened, Abrogena says, would be on the part of the practitioners.

"It's really important for us that we upgrade our skills. This is being continuously done. We have seminars that deal with the best practices. We have even invited experts from developed countries to talk about their experiences and how we could learn from them," he shares.

Acceptance by clients is also one foundation the industry wants to focus on. This is especially true in the case of the CTFs, which under new regulations will be known as unit investment trust funds (UITFs). These new regulations will create changes in the processes of market players and in the ways the funds are marketed, hence, there is a need for the trust industry to ensure that clients understand these.

"We know that acceptance is not going to be fast. But in this case, the best the investment

TRUST INDUSTRY/ H4

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Messages

MY ESTEEMED greetings to the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP) as you spearhead the observance of this year's Trust Consciousness Week.

A credible and reliable trust industry is one of the foundations of a strong financial and capital market. The efforts of the government to reform the financial sector should be supported by all stakeholders.

This year's theme "Strengthening Foundations for Growth," reflects your responsiveness to our initiatives. Your aggressive promotion of the trust industry would greatly contribute to the attainment of our 10-point legacy agenda under the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan. Let us work together to beat the odds in making our financial system more responsive to the present and future needs of our country.

I wish you success in your endeavors. *Mabuhay*!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

GREETINGS to the officers and members of the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP), our key partners in upholding integrity and competitiveness of the financial sector.

TOAP has indeed been instrumental in leading its member institutions to contribute significantly to the growth of the financial industry in terms of delivering efficient and reliable trust and fund management services. The Trust Consciousness Week is a perfect time for all players in the trust business to jointly educate the public on sound and prudent investments. As investment professionals, it is your responsibility to guide the investing public and inform them on the availability of a variety of investment schemes.

Guided by the theme, "Strengthening Foundations for Growth," I am convinced TOAP will remain the prime mover in sustaining the competitiveness of the trust industry amid an increasing competitive and globalized financial environment.

On its part, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall endeavor to achieve our shared goal of promoting a stable and robust financial system and consequently, a sustainable economic growth. Toward this end, we have embarked on a broad set of reforms that included, among others, initiatives aimed at a more expedient development of the domestic capital market. Specifically, we are continuously rationalizing our regulatory framework to allow financial innovation, and to create a wider domestic investor base where both sophisticated and unsophisticated investors can participate under adequate safeguards. With a more developed capital marker, there will be more efficient transformation of savings to investments which are must-have resource to fuel real economic growth.

With you on our side, we are confident that significant progress can be made.

More power to TOAP! I look forward to a truly rewarding celebration of the Trust Consciousness Week.

RAFAEL BUENAVENTURA
Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

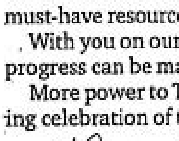
FOR 40 years, the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP), has committed itself to building an efficient and reliable trust industry through the promotion of sound and prudent investments. I commend the officers and members of TOAP for doing a fine job. I hope you will carry on with the same sense of dynamism and fortitude.

To keep pace with the demands of an increasingly tough economic environment, it becomes critical for business to keep hold of strong corporate governance ideals. I challenge you to take the lead in fostering time-honored values in the trust profession—prudence, credibility and competency.

As you celebrate the Trust Consciousness Week, may you be reminded of your role in guiding your clients on making wise investment decisions and protecting their interests. Promoting investor protection is key to sustaining integrity and strengthening foundations for a more effective trust industry.

On that note, I wish the Association more productive years ahead. I hope you will also continue to support the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in pursuing vital reforms for a healthier financial system and a deeper domestic capital market.

ALBERTO V. REYES
Deputy Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas



WE MARK time by celebrating birthdays and observing anniversaries. So do we, in the Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines (TIFP), note the passing of another year. The Trust Consciousness Week, a yearly event, reminds us not only that a year has gone by again but also urges all trust practitioners and investment managers to take stock of themselves and after indulging in some self-examination find out whether or not they have kept up to the needs of the changing times or have been amiss one way or another in their duties to their clients and to their institution.

I am sure it does not really take a trust consciousness week for these people to remind them that they should always be on top of every situation that comes along with respect to their chosen profession. Just the same, the Week is always a reminder that trust officers should always be true to their profession, loyal to their institution, act with prudence and show genuine concern for the welfare of their clients.

The Week is a call for greatness.

More power to the men and women who are responsible for the various activities that enliven trust consciousness week.

LAURO J. JOCSON
President
Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines

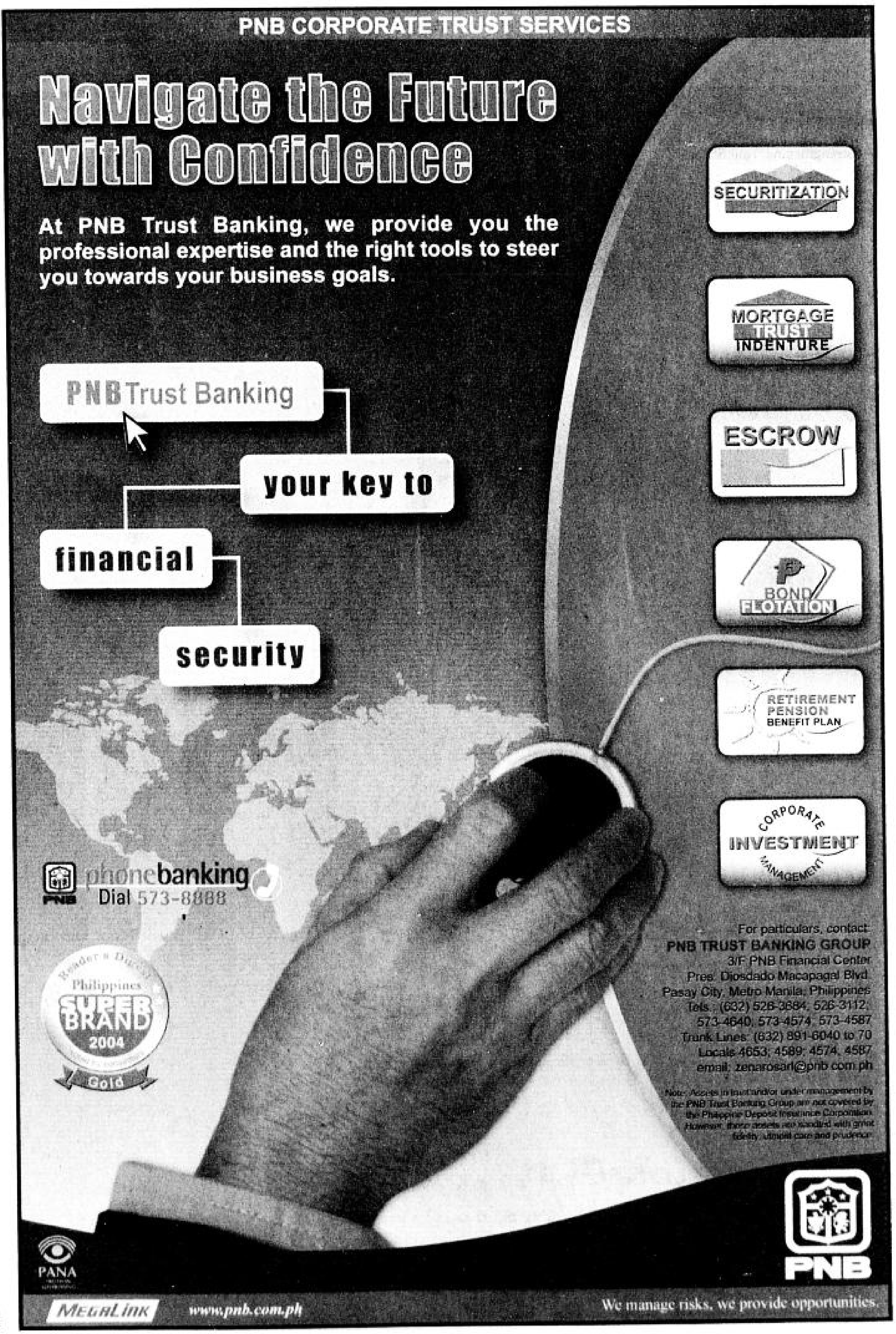
TIFP OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES (2004-2005).
Seated, from left: Ofelia R. Junio, administrator; Lauro J. Jocson (Prudential Bank), president and member-education committee; Roberto S. Vergara (Land Bank), vice-president and member-education committee. Standing, from left: Rolando D. Esguerra (Equitable PCIB), treasurer and member-education committee; Ma. Elena S. Sarmiento (PNB), member-board of trustees; Serafin P. Tongco (Banco Filipino), member-board of trustees; Lourdes Bernadette M. Ferrer (RCBC), secretary; and Wilfredo S. Talastas (Security Bank), member-education committee. Not shown are: Josephine E. Jolejole (Union Bank), member-board of trustees.

THE TRUST Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP) celebrates its 41st year with the theme "Strengthening Foundations for Growth", together with its educational arm the Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines (TIFP).

The industry has seen robust growth in recent years, a testament to wide public acceptance of its products and services against a highly competitive environment. This year will mark the shift from Common Trust Funds (CTFs) to Unit Investment Trust Funds (UITFs), a move that we expect will slow down the growth of this segment that has driven much of the industry's growth. But we believe this is all for the better because the new UITFs will clearly be seen as investment instruments and not subject to the restrictions and intermediation costs of the CTFs. As the industry gears up for this change, we likewise continue to promote transparency, risk disclosure, and client suitability standards in the rules and in practice, while advocating the removal of restrictions that reduce the industry's competitiveness. The focus of these efforts is this year's theme - "Strengthening Foundations for Growth."

As we celebrate Trust Consciousness Week, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our regulators for their patience in seeking and hearing out the industry position well as openness to our initiatives. Likewise, I wish to thank my fellow trust officers, who, by their active participation, support, and plain good service to customers, continue to strengthen the industry as it grows to be a major force in the country's capital market.

ADOR A. ABROGENA
President
Trust Officers Association of the Philippines



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Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
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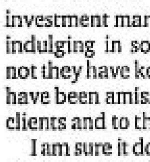
Deputy Governor
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas



WE MARK time by celebrating birthdays and observing anniversaries. So do we, in the Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines (TIFP), note the passing of another year. The Trust Consciousness Week, a yearly event, reminds us not only that a year has gone by again but also urges all trust practitioners and investment managers to take stock of themselves and after indulging in some self-examination find out whether or not they have kept up to the needs of the changing times or have been amiss one way or another in their duties to their clients and to their institution.

I am sure it does not really take a trust consciousness week for these people to remind them that they should always be on top of every situation that comes along with respect to their chosen profession. Just the same, the Week is always a reminder that trust officers should always be true to their profession, loyal to their institution, act with prudence and show genuine concern for the welfare of their clients.

The Week is a call for greatness.

More power to the men and women who are responsible for the various activities that enliven trust consciousness week.

LAURO J. JOCSON
President
Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines

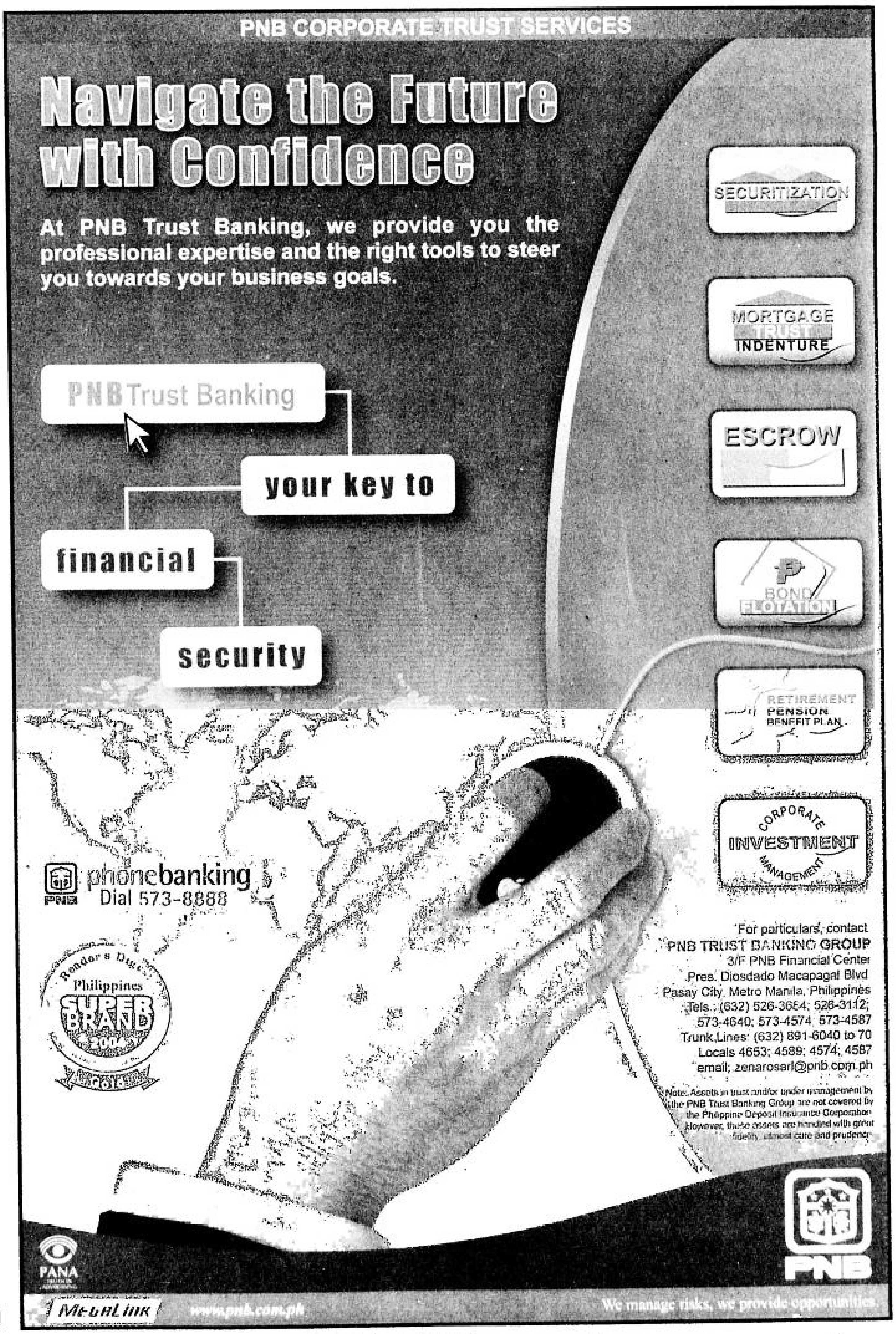
TIFP OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES (2004-2005).
Seated, from left: Ofelia R. Junio, administrator; Lauro J. Jocson (Prudential Bank), president and member-education committee; Roberto S. Vergara (Land Bank), vice-president and member-education committee. Standing, from left: Rolando D. Esguerra (Equitable PCIB), treasurer and member-education committee; Ma. Elena S. Sarmiento (PNB), member-board of trustees; Serafin P. Tongco (Banco Filipino), member-board of trustees; Lourdes Bernadette M. Ferrer (RCBC), secretary; and Wilfredo S. Talastas (Security Bank), member-education committee. Not shown are: Josephine E. Jolejole (Union Bank), member-board of trustees.

THE TRUST Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP) celebrates its 41st year with the theme "Strengthening Foundations for Growth", together with its educational arm the Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines (TIFP).

The industry has seen robust growth in recent years, a testament to wide public acceptance of its products and services against a highly competitive environment. This year will mark the shift from Common Trust Funds (CTFs) to Unit Investment Trust Funds (UITFs), a move that we expect will slow down the growth of this segment that has driven much of the industry's growth. But we believe this is all for the better because the new UITFs will clearly be seen as investment instruments and not subject to the restrictions and intermediation costs of the CTFs. As the industry gears up for this change, we likewise continue to promote transparency, risk disclosure, and client suitability standards in the rules and in practice, while advocating the removal of restrictions that reduce the industry's competitiveness. The focus of these efforts is this year's theme - "Strengthening Foundations for Growth."

As we celebrate Trust Consciousness Week, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our regulators for their patience in seeking and hearing out the industry position well as openness to our initiatives. Likewise, I wish to thank my fellow trust officers, who, by their active participation, support, and plain good service to customers, continue to strengthen the industry as it grows to be a major force in the country's capital market.

ADOR A. ABROGENA
President
Trust Officers Association of the Philippines



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WORKING hand in hand with the BSP Bank Supervision Policy Committee is one of the major activities of TOAP in pursuance of regulatory reforms. Shown are (seated, from left) BSP Bank Officer Carmen V. Hermedes VI; TOAP vice president Ma. Teresa R. Toledo, BSP Assistant Governor Nestor A. Espenilla Jr; BSP Deputy Governor Alberto V. Reyes; TOAP president Ador A. Abrogena; BSP Managing Director Ricardo P. Lirio. Standing, (from left) are TOAP director Serafin P. Tongco; TOAP director Rafael G. Ayuste Jr; TOAP treasurer Marvin V. Fausto; TOAP director Susan M. Manalo; TOAP director Ma. Elena S. Sarmiento; BSP Managing Director Ma. Dolores B. Yuviengco; BSP OIC, SDC Zenaida S. Abiog; BSP Deputy Director Fernando B. Caballa, TOAP secretary Federico P. Tancongco, TOAP director Raul C. Diaz.

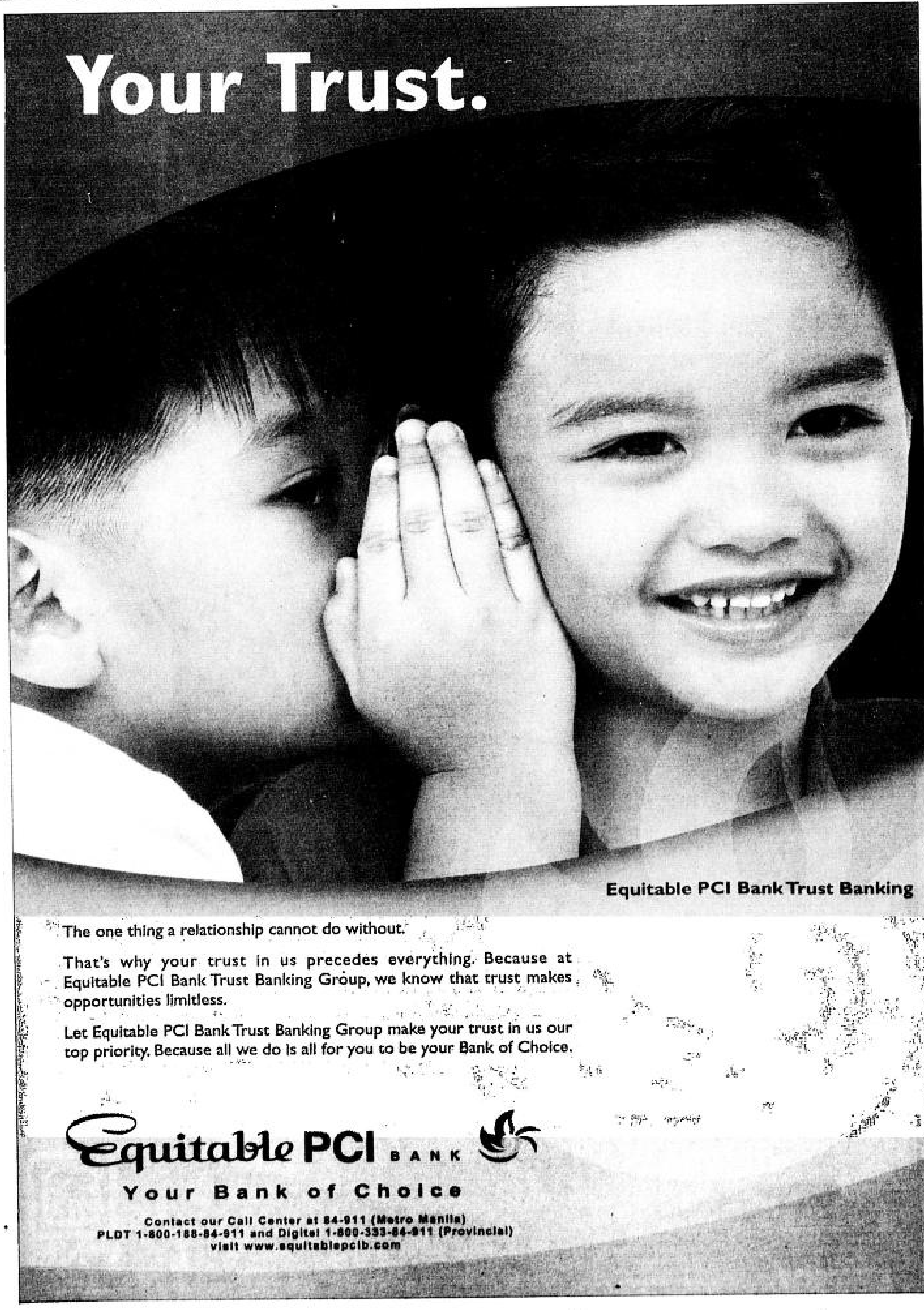
Aggressive advances by the PNB Trust Banking Group

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank's Trust Banking Group is advancing further into improving its operational efficiencies and enhancing the over-all quality of its customer service. PNB is presently finalizing negotiations with a world-class software provider for a fully integrated Trust Banking system solution that will handle front to back office transactions, provide real-time data processing and flexible reporting and allow multi-currency trading, portfolio modeling, risk management and BSP compliance checking. The new system will support the growing business requirements of PNB Trust Banking Group and address the ever-changing needs and expectations of its clients.

Once in place, the new system will allow PNB-Trust to focus its energy and resources in providing customer with new and superior investment opportunities, including soon-to-be-launched peso and dollar denominated Unit Investment Trust Funds (UITFs). To adequately prepare for the marketing demands of rolling out these new products. PNB-Trust has also started doing in-depth and intensive training workshops for the bank's branch and other marketing units. The introduction of UITFs is intended to align management of pooled funds with international best practices, thereby enhancing the integrity of Trust and its products with retail investors.

PNB also takes pride in having a wide array of investment services for corporations and institutions that include corporate investment management, escrow management, retirement fund management, securitization, mortgage, trust indenture and bond flotation. For high net-worth individuals, PNB Trust offers its Revocable and Irrevocable Trusts and Investment Management Accounts.

Through its significant achievements and gains over the past few years, PNB Trust has positioned itself into becoming a major player in the Trust Industry by utilizing its winning combination of a higher-than-market return on investments, personalized service, superior products and a highly skilled workforce capable of meeting the various needs of its clients.



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Trust industry strengthens foundations as it welcomes impressive growth

From page H2

manager can do is to tell the client the fund's investment objectives, where the funds are invested and its yield history. We know that until you have a long history the acceptance would not be that easy or would be slow. But once the idea catches on and gain acceptance, we are positive because we think this is a better product than the CTF, it has the potential to grow more than the existing CTF."

The TOAP is also in continuous dialogue with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the industry's regulating body, with regards to rules on investment management accounts.

"We're trying to get the industry to adopt those practices because they are already tested in developed countries. This could have a large impact on the industry's growth."

Says Abrogena, which further explains their thrust of strengthening the industry's foundations, "We're lobbying for the industry to grow but we also don't want loosening up everything just because of growth. We are after higher standards of transparency and risk disclosure so that the growth comes from a better appreciation of the advantages and benefits of the trust service. In turn, we are advocating that the trust departments not be subject to the same restrictions that you find in the banks, especially on the investment side. That way, the industry remains competitive and still we are able to provide the level of service that adds value to the customer."

With new regulations always coming, Abrogena says that TOAP makes sure that they are able to communicate with the BSP the effect of these regulations in the industry and on the part of the banks they are able to prepare.

"Like in the case of the UITF Circular which mandated the phaseout of existing CTFs to UITFs, we have immediately trained our staff so that everybody in the industry, right down to the front liner, fully understands the regulation. This is the only way we can better help the banks as well as the clients," says Abrogena adding that training and education is the only key for the new regulation to be better understood by the clients.

On the issue of custodianship, Abrogena says that the TOAP has supported the third party custody for the UITF but not yet on the segregated funds.

"Third party custodianship (especially for the UITF) is a way of protecting the investors. It's also good for the investment managers because this way they could focus their energies on the investments. It's also good for the industry because in this setup there would be third party check and valuation of the funds since the net asset value is public," he explains.

Abrogena says that this is not the way for the segregated funds because of certain issues.

"In segregated trust accounts, the trustee takes the place of the owner. When you place your money, you're effectively transferring the ownership of your fund or your property to the trustee though the benefits stay with the owner," explains Abrogena.

"If the trustee is the owner on record, why does he need a third party custodian? And when you deliver the property to the trustee, you're effectively delivering it to the owner, so why the need for third party custodianship?"

He adds that there are also confidentiality issues here. "When a trustor goes to a trustee for an arrangement, the trustor has confidence in the trustee and nobody else needs to be involved in the transaction. When there's third party custodianship, another entity goes with the transaction," he says.

The third party custodians are accredited by the BSP. In trust, there's a choice but in government securities, it is mandated. Abrogena nevertheless says that there are merits to third party custodianship. "Here, clients are given an option. If the trustor wants separation between the investment manager and his assets and is comfortable with that arrangement, so be it. It he doesn't want to, then he is not forced to have custodianship."

TOAP also helps member banks and institutions make their products competitive.

"In terms of service, we make sure that we deliver on the promise that we give to our clients. Not promises of returns, because that is not allowed, but in terms of standards of service and performance. We are also advocating that banks strengthen the standards on risk management, on compliance, on disclosures to clients, that there are no conflicts of interests between the clients' funds and the bank side of the business. In case there's a conflict, the trustee should take the side of the trustor and not the side of the bank. There's also the suitability issue where the trustee should make sure that the trustor gets the correct fund and fully understands the risks," he says.

> Though the notable growth of the industry has spurred concerns primarily in protecting the investments of clients and the banks, the trust practitioners through TOAP make sure that these issues are fully addressed

The concept of trust was brought to the country by the Americans in 1918 and was formally written in the country's Civil Code in the 1950s. Trust products proliferated during the 1980s to 1990s and have, in fact, grown to assets under management of P686 billion as of September 2003. Trust products and services range from simple custodianship and safekeeping to corporate mortgage trust indentures to complex estate planning and employee benefit administration and fund management. These assets are managed or invested by the trust institution in accordance with the trust or investment management agreement signed with the investor or owner of the assets.

Though the notable growth of the industry has spurred concerns primarily in protecting the investments of clients and the banks, the trust practitioners through TOAP make sure that these issues are fully addressed. This is the primary reason why the industry is building up its foundations. The industry is growing very fast, new products are being introduced in the market and investment products are becoming more sophisticated, it is just appropriate for the industry to take vital steps so they don't lose everything just because of growth.

TIFP geared for evolving financial markets

THE LOCAL financial markets have evolved significantly over the years. Investment products have become more sophisticated, the assessment of market trends has become more complex and investors are constantly looking for ways to get better yields from their investments.

Financial institutions also are faced with stiff competition not only from their local peers but also from foreign counterparts in offering new products. The menu of investment alternatives now ranges from the traditional deposit products, government securities to derivatives and structured products. Buzz words such as options, swaps, marking to market and other such terminology have become common in the investment parlance.

With all these changes in the financial markets comes the need for market reforms. Regulators are constantly instituting changes to ensure that the investing public is adequately protected. Market activities are closely monitored to ensure that investment scams that could strip investors of hard-earned money are minimized, if not completely averted.

The trust industry, where the public may avail of a whole range of investment opportunities through the various trust products, is also affected by these rapid changes.

These developments, in turn, have significant effects on how business is done in the industry, on the banks offering the trust products, on the investors as well as on the industry's regulating body. It is important that all these stakeholders fully understand these changes. This is where the Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines (TIFP) comes into the picture.

The TIFP is a non-stock, non-government organization originally established to be the educational and training arm of the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP). Today, it now serves as an independent educational institution for the dissemination of the knowledge of trust, the first of its kind in the country. While the Institute is geared primarily for its member banks, it is now also open to representatives of government regulatory bodies, non-financial institutions and other professionals interested in trust.

In line with these objectives, TIFP continues to offer its One-Year Course on Trust Operations and Investment Management. The course covers the fundamental concepts of trust, the legal and regulatory framework governing various trust arrangements, various techniques in portfolio management and trust accounting.

This basic course has been used by financial institutions in hiring personnel to man their trust units and as the industry's certification program. It has, to date, produced more than 1,500 graduates who are now executives at the helm of their respective trust organizations. The list also includes topnotch professionals such as lawyers, auditors and accountants from both the private and government sectors.

To complement this basic course, TIFP also offers specialized seminars and modules such as the Basics of Foreign Exchange, Introduction to Non-Deliverable Forwards and Derivatives, Risk Management, Compliance and Audit Concerns for Trust, Updates on Trust Regulations, Tax Issues and Specialized Courses on Investment Management.

Looking beyond the financial aspect of the trust business and to ensure professionalism within the industry, TIFP provides the subject "Code of Conduct and Ethics for Trust Practitioners" which is part of the One-Year Course on Trust Operations and Investment Management.

According to Lauro Jocson, TIFP president, only through continuing education on the art of trust will trust practitioners be able to cope with the growing complexities of trust and the financial markets.

"The industry continues to draw from the professional expertise of the TIFP. We have also geared our programs towards providing practitioners with the tools needed to handle more sophisticated investment alternatives," he stresses.

Now on its 28th year, the Institute have accommodated various groups in offering short courses to various sectors.

Free seminars have also been given to student groups and faculty members of different colleges and universities in Metro Manila to augment their classroom training. Private entities-which include banks, insurance companies and large corporations-have also tapped the Institute to develop and conduct exclusive programs for their professionals.

Looking back at the vision of its founder, the late Victorio T. Gomez, TIFP has gone a long way. With the driving forces behind the Institute, its partner, the Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP) and the support of the regulators, the dream of reaching to the public and spreading awareness of trust and its benefits will continue to become a reality.

"TIFP has always responded in the way that it is best known for, in the education and the new trends and products in the area of finance and trust," says Jocson.

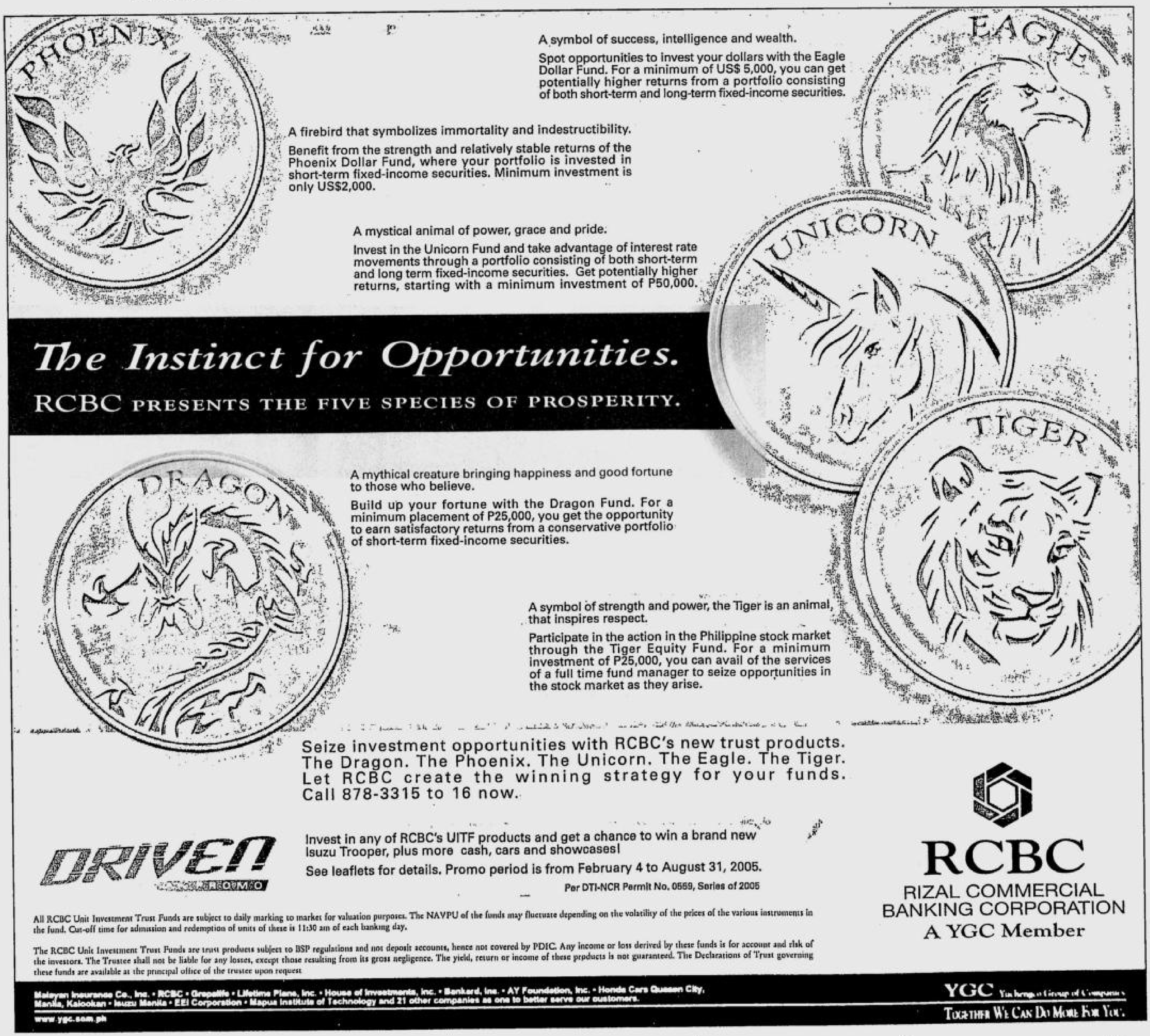
He adds that through these, the TIFP is able to do its share in professionalizing the industry and in keeping all stakeholders knowledgeable about trust. *Joel V. Nigos*

> TIFP provides the subject "Code of Conduct and Ethics for Trust Practitioners" which is part of the One-Year Course on Trust Operations and Investment Management

ANNOUNCEMENT

The TIFP also wishes to announce that it is now accepting applicants for the One-Year Course on Trust Operations and Investment Management for the School Year 2005-2006. Classes will start on July 2, 2005. This Course is open to all employees or representatives of member institutions of the TIFP and the TOAP. The Institute also welcomes applicants from other business sectors as well as private individuals who want to have additional knowledge for continuing self-development.

Application/Registration forms are available at the TIFP office located at Room 1918 Cityland Condominium 10, Tower II, H.V. Dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City. Interested parties may call these numbers: 894-2385, 892-6671 and 892-4689 (fax).



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See leaflets for details. Promo period is from February 4 to August 31, 2005.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0569, Series of 2005

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Trust Consciousness Week schedule of activities

March 28, 2005

3 p.m. TOAP board of directors annual election
Venue: Hotel Intercontinental, Makati

7 p.m. General membership meeting
Guest speaker, Dep. Governor Alberto V. Reyes
Venue: Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinetal

March 29, 2005

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Seminar on 'IAS/IFRS in Trust Banking' Part 1
Venue : DLSU Professional Schools (RCBC Campus), 5th floor RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue corner HV Dela Costa Street, Makati City

March 30, 2005

8 a.m. to 12 noon Seminar on 'IAS/IFRS in Trust Banking' Part 2
Venue : DLSU Professional Schools (RCBC Campus), 5th Floor, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue corner HV Dela Costa Street, Makati
Seminar Fee: P5,000

March 31, 2005

3:30 p.m. Visit to the residents of Golden Acres Home for the Aged

April 1, 2005

1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Free public forum
Fundamentals of UITFs
A Closer Look at Navpu and MTM
Venue: JV del Rosario Function Rooms 2 to 5, 4th floor AIM Conference Center Benavidez corner Trasierra Streets, Legazpi Village, Makati City

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BDO-TRUST

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WE FIND ways. For BDO, this is more than just a catchphrase -it is the philosophy instilled in every employee from the very first time he enters BDO's doors upon being hired up to the day he retires or moves on to other endeavors. It is the springboard from which BDO's management designs products and services aimed to satisfy the banking requirements of any entity - individuals or corporations and institutions.

The Trust Department of BDO is no exception to the practice of this philosophy. It is committed to find ways to fulfill the need of individual, corporate or institutional investor with reasonable asset size to grow these assets on every legitimate opportunity, while keeping faith to the limitations imposed by regulatory agencies, as well as the investors' own objectives, preferences and tolerances, over the medium- to long-term horizon. It keeps its ears to the ground for market, legal, and industry developments, and devises unique products and services that could take full advantage of any benefits that such developments may present for the clients. It consistently steps up to the challenges posed by volatile market conditions through the unwavering maintenance of a prudent but tested investment stance—only explore investment opportunities that never compromise the safety of the client's principal.

Not surprisingly, such fidelity to the clients' interests has reaped the expected rewards for BDO. From operating under the proverbial radar since it secured its license in 1988 throughout the 1990s, BDO-Trust is now universally accepted as a major player in the industry. Next only to Metrobank, BPI and Equitable-PCIBank, BDO currently occupies the fourth slot in the industry in terms of assets, with over P80 billion worth of trust funds under its skilled management, a milestone considering the relatively young life of this institution. The momentum does not show any sign of slowing down. In 2004, BDO-Trust grew by over 34%, healthily outpacing the top ten banks' average asset growth rate of 24.90%. Its performance as a Fund Manager is also something to be reckoned with. For three consecutive years from calendar years 2001 to 2003, it topped the Watson-Wyatt Survey on Investment Performance of Retirement Funds in the Philippines, an independent survey of the quarterly yield generated by retirement and provident funds, edging out the erstwhile industry leaders.

A full-service trust department, BDO-Trust offers its clients a wide array of products aimed at catering to every conceivable trust and investment management need of individuals and corporations. It specializes in customized arrangements covering Trusteeship, Agency and Investment Advisory Services, as well as "pre-packaged" investment products such as CTFs and UITFs that capture the varying investment needs and appetites of different investors. Among these services, worthy of special mention are the WEALTH PLANNER, the DISCRETIONARY RETIREMENT FUND MANAGEMENT and the BDO POOLED FUNDS.

The WEALTH PLANNER

Soon after the BSP issued the implementing regulations covering the Tax Reform Act of 1997 in the year 2000, BDO-Trust acted with the usual responsiveness and launched the Wealth Planner in 2001. This unique product is designed for individuals who wish to take advantage of the tax privileges accorded to medium to long- term investors by said Act, which stipulates that investments held on for at least five (5) years shall be exempted from withholding taxes, and likewise provides for reduced taxes for holding periods of not less than three (3) years. This product also serves as a practical estate-planning tool, as it requires BDO and the client to execute a living trust agreement, under which the client will name his beneficiaries and specify the conditions under which these beneficiaries would receive their bequests. It would seem that the investing public had been thirsting for such a product, judging from the number of accounts that has been opened under this vehicle since its introduction, as well as these accounts' fund levels. This translates to more satisfied BDO customers who appreciate that, for the medium-term, they are locked in investments that give them not only incomparable yields but also unparalleled tax and estate planning advantages.

DISCRETIONARY RETIREMENT FUND MANAGEMENT

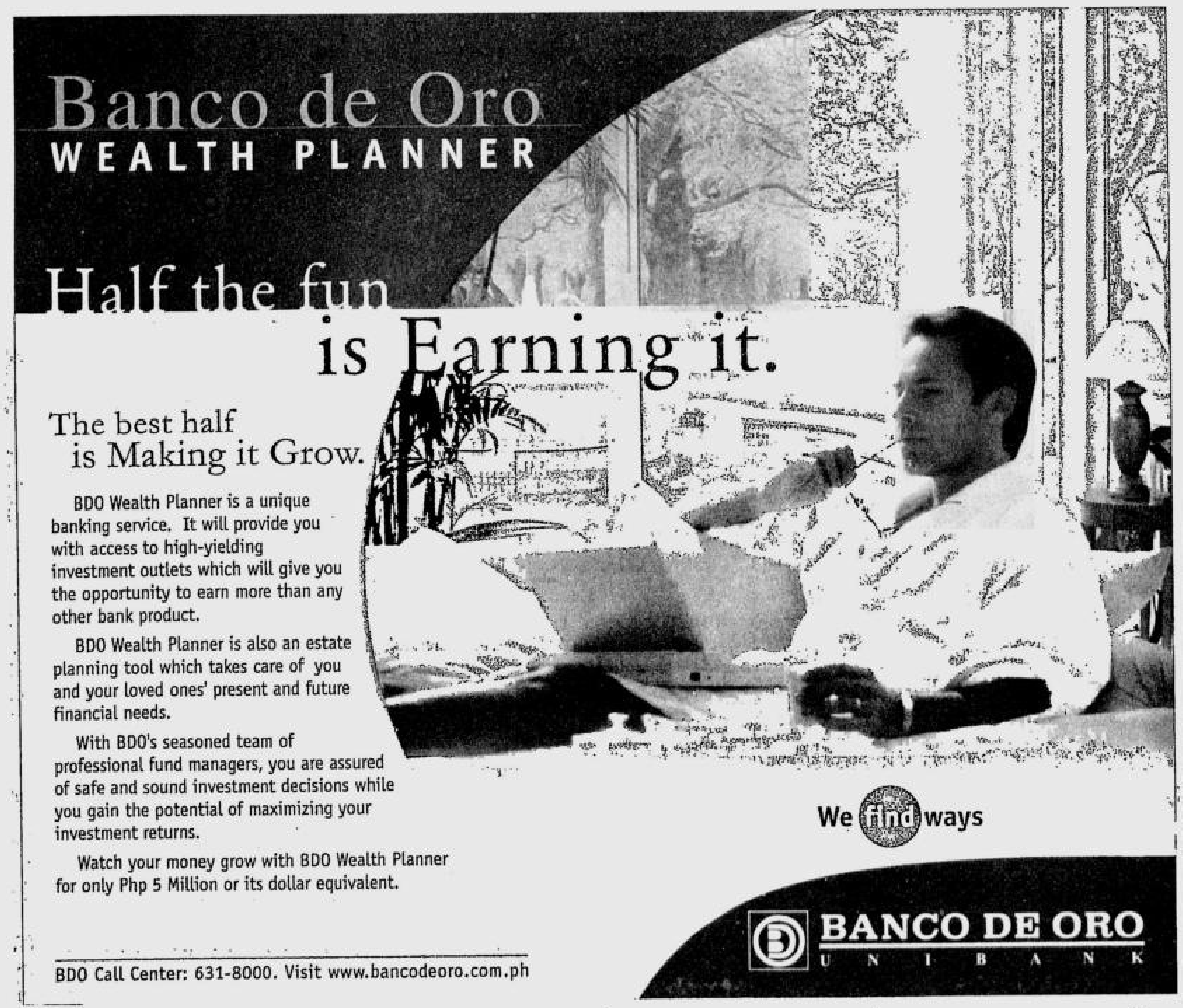
BDO-Trust manages employee benefit plans of various sizes and classifications - fixed-benefit plans, fixed-contribution plans, hybrids, and others. Seasoned portfolio managers and fund administrators design and maintain custom-made portfolios for each Plan, based on a careful analysis of the Plan's requirements and current legislation affecting retirement benefits, coupled with BDO's investment strategy of portfolio diversification, long term growth orientation and emphasis on asset quality. These managers are also trained to process Plan payments, answer questions regarding Plan details, and may be sought for the accurate interpretation of existing jurisprudence governing qualified benefit plans.

POOLED FUNDS

Following its highly successful venture into pooled fund management when it introduced the most popular Peso and Dollar-denominated Common Trust Funds in the market - the Smart Money Funds, the Premium Gold Fund, and the Premium Income Fund - BDO-Trust is poised to launch its new Unit Investment Trust Funds. These UITFs have already been approved by the BSP as compliant with its very stringent requirements, and are anticipated to appeal to both the income-conscious and the growth-oriented, the retail and wholesale classes of investors. BDO-Trust will commence offering its Money Market, Bond and Balanced UITFs to the public in the next few months,

These are just a few of the numerous products clients may avail of at BDO-Trust. For the full range of BDO-Trust services, clients may inquire at tel. Number 636-6060 or visit any of BDO's 183 branch-strong network.

In the meantime, expect BDO-Trust to continue finding ways.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Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines
Trust Officers Association of the Philippines

Public Forum on UITFs

Venue: JV del Rosario Function Rooms 2 to 5, 4th Floor AIM
Conference Center, Benavidez corner Trasierra Streets, Legazpi
Village, Makati City
Time: Friday, April 1, 2005
1:00 to 5:00 PM

PROGRAM

EMCEE: Rafael G. Ayuste Jr

REGISTRATION	1:00 to 2:00 p.m.
FORUM PROPER	2:00 p.m.
INVOCATION	Rolando D. Esguerra FVP, Equitable PCIB
NATIONAL ANTHEM	Rolando D. Esguerra
WELCOME REMARKS	lawyer Lauro J. Jocson SVP, Prudential Bank TIFP President
INTRODUCTION OF 1ST LECTURER	Maite R. Toledo VP, HSBC TOAP vice president and director
1ST LECTURE - FUNDAMENTALS OF UITFs	Roberto S. Vergara VP/trust officer, LandBank TIFP director

- Definition of UITFs; Characteristics of UITFs; Types of UITFs; UITF Plan Rules; UITF Terms and Conditions; Accounting and Operating Methodology of UITFs; Advantages of Investing on UITFs; UITFs Differentiated from Deposits; Other Considerations

LIGHT SNACKS	
INTRODUCTION OF 2ND LECTURER	Maite R. Toledo
2ND LECTURE - A CLOSER LOOK AT NAVPU AND MTM	Wilfredo S. Talastas SVP/trust officer, Security Bank

- Methodology; Accrual vs. Mark to Market (MTM); Benefits of MTM to Investors; Sample ROI Computations; Dynamics of Price and Interest Rates; Impact of MTM on Value of Investments; Other Considerations

OPEN FORUM	Rafael G. Ayuste Jr SVP, Metrobank TOAP director moderator
CLOSING REMARKS	Ador A. Abrogena EVP, Banco de Oro TOAP president

ING equity fund doubles client money in 21 months

A fund managed by Dutch financial giant ING doubled in terms of Net Asset Value per Unit (NAVPU) in just twenty-one months.

The ING Philippine Equity Fund, a UITF approved under Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Circular No. 447, generated **101.86% in absolute returns** since its launch on May 5, 2003 - as of price date January 31, 2005. A unit of the Fund was worth PHP 201.86 on this price date, from an initial NAVPU of 100.00 when it was launched.

The Fund is one of three UITFs available to retail investors, the other two being funds invested in Philippine dollar fixed income and peso fixed income securities, respectively. Since the May 2003 launch, the ING Philippine Equity Fund has earned at a rate of **47.05% per annum,** the ING Philippine Dollar Fixed Income Fund at **9.97% p.a.,** while the ING Peso Fixed Income Fund at **7.32% p.a.** (As of February 28, 2005). These figures are net of taxes, management fees and qualified expenses.

First UITFs in Philippine industry

The BSP approved the UITF Plan Rules for the ING Funds **last November 22, 2004, making them the FIRST in the industry to be allowed to convert into the UITF regime.** The ING Funds are now exempt from the BSP rule that requires peso-denominated Common Trust Funds (CTFs) to keep 19% of its assets in reserves. This increases their potential to generate returns as reserve placements tend to earn less than investments in financial market instruments.

They have likewise been **fully marked-to-market** since their launch back in May 2003. Mark-to-market valuation is an international best practice in Fund management that makes the value of an investment more transparent to the retail client, and furthermore allows him to access the full return potential of the market.

ING Investment Management is **the top retail fund** manager in the Asia Pacific region, as reported by Asia Asset Management Magazine (a regional finance publication) last September 2004. It is part of the ING Group, one of the world's largest financial institutions with a market capitalization of EUR 48.4 billion as of January 31, 2005. The firm operates in the Philippines as the Trust Department of ING Bank N.V., Manila Branch.

The numbers speak for themselves.

Unit Investment Trust Fund (UITF)	Earnings per annum*
ING Philippine Equity Fund	47.05 %
ING Philippine Dollar Fixed Income Fund	9.97 %
ING Peso Fixed Income Fund	7.32 %

* Annualized historical returns of our Funds, net of taxes and management fees, since inception last May 5, 2003. (As of February 28, 2005)
* Past performance is not indicative of future performance. It is a trust product. Investment or participation is subject to risk and possible loss of principal, and is for the account of the participant. It is not insured by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC).

Introducing the ING Investment Management's high-performance funds:

ING Philippine Equity Fund
Own a portfolio of Philippine stocks that has doubled in value in just 21 months since its launch. Diversify. Ride rallies. Participate in IPOs. Benefit from quantitative stock analysis done by the pros.

ING Philippine Dollar Fixed Income Fund
Ever held a portfolio comprised of Philippine dollar-denominated bonds that normally cost at least $100,000 each? Reap marked-to-market gains on top of your interest income. Enjoy active management of interest rate risk.

ING Peso Fixed Income Fund
Invest in a portfolio of peso bonds actively managed by professionals. Or get your hands full with T-bills, FXTNs, RTBs, CMBs, zeroes...inflation rates, yield curve analysis, issuance schedules...3rd party custodianship and other regulations ...(and that doesn't even include the paperwork).

Unit Investment Trust Funds (UITFs) with a track record. That's what ING Investment Management has to offer. Our global investment processes, distinctive team approach, and on-the-ground presence in the markets we serve, make a difference– a big difference in performance terms.

And there's more. As the Trust Department of ING Bank N.V. (Philippine Branch), we're the FIRST to be permitted to convert into Unit Investment Trust Funds by the industry regulator. We've been managing our Funds in accordance with global best practices since their launch in May 2003.

Performer and pioneer. With the advent of marked-to-market investment funds, which Fund Manager will you trust?

Contact us at 840-8792 to 93 and uitf@asia.ing.com.

ING
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines

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WITH MORE THAN
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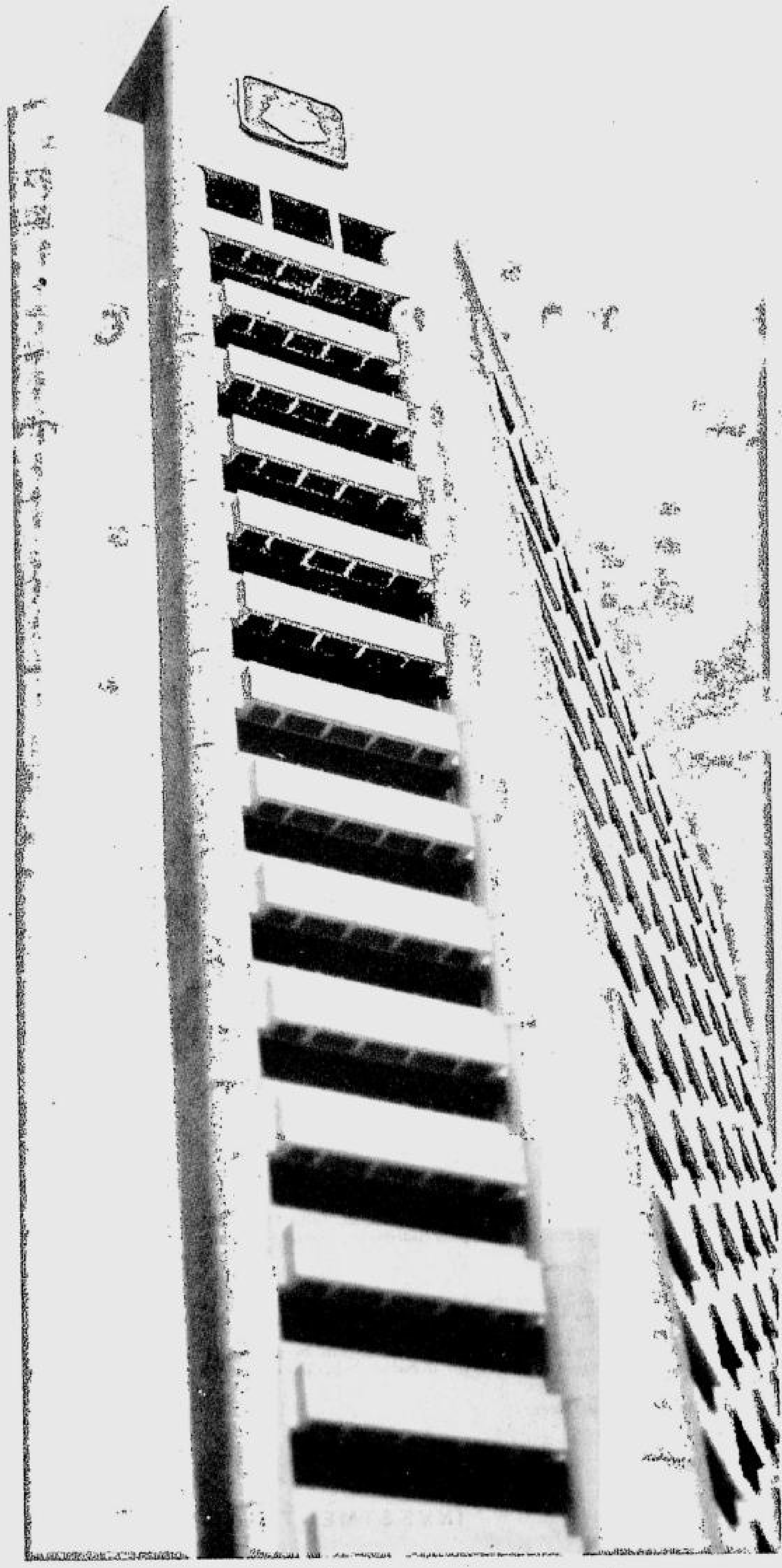

BPI, as the industry leader, manages more than ₱230 billion* worth of assets, offering investors a wide array of institutional and personal products and services.

Portfolio Management Account - offered to institutional investors, products and services include:

- Employee Retirement/ Benefit Funds
- Corporate Funds
- Pre-Need Funds
- Mutual Funds

Personal Wealth Management - for select high networth individuals, products and services include:

- Personal Funds/Living Trusts
- BPI Legacy
- BPI Individual Retirement Account (BPI IRA)

Unit Investment Trust Funds - offered to retail investors, providing them access to diversified and high yielding portfolios through pooled investments.

To know more about
our products and services,
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BPI ASSET MANAGEMENT
Put Your Trust In Our Name

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
A tradition of leadership

*Based on February 28, 2005 market value of all assets held. Assets held by BPI Asset Management is presently the largest within the Asset Management and Trust Industry

TOAP highlights

...Foremost of the things TOAP wants to strengthen is making sure that trust products are fully understood by the clients, that options are all clearly laid out to them so they are able to make the better choice...

...Acceptance by clients is also one foundation the industry wants to focus on. This is especially true in the case of the CTFs, which under new regulations will be known as unit investment trust funds (UITFs). These new regulations will create changes in the processes of market players and in the ways the funds are marketed, hence, there is a need for the trust industry to ensure that clients understand these...

BPI Asset Management continues to dominate

RECOGNIZING the challenge of keeping industry leadership and at the same time surpassing its own standards, the Group continued to explore new heights in 2004. BPI Asset Management ended the year with P159.9 billion in assets or over P210 in terms of market value. Now, with over P230 billion in assets managed, the Group continues to dominate the asset management and trust industry.

By consistently satisfying customer needs via new products and services, the Group was able to break the P200-billion mark. By providing products and services based on specific and unique needs of each key client, the Group was able to come up with value propositions to dynamically help its clients achieve their unique financial objectives.

True to its promise to provide new products and services, the Group launched several firsts. The most recent of which are: (1) the first marked to-market pooled fund via its BPI Global Funds, (2) the first long-term tax-exempt living trust account or BPI Legacy, and (3) the first and only 24/7 Web-based report delivery in the local asset management industry via BPI Asset Management Online. BPI Asset Management is also the fund manager of the largest mutual fund, ALFM and the country's first and only index tracker fund, the Philippine Index Fund (PIF).

1st tax-exempt product

BPI Legacy, a living trust account, is the first long-term tax-exempt product in the market. An offshoot of this innovative product is the BPI IRA. BPI IRA is a long-term investment account made affordable to retail individual investors. Using the comfort of branch banking, the reliability of BPI's insurance business and the Group's expertise in fund management, clients can now secure their future via BPI IRA. Both products have provided BPI Asset Management with over P600 million in terms of new investment accounts manage.

In 2005, as the industry gears up to position itself amidst market reforms, BPI Asset Management will continue to provide not only quality products but also superior returns to those who have put their trust in its name.